

SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER[®]

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

by Alexander Augunas, Rigby Bendele, and Erin Roberts

The Pathfinder logo is rendered in a stylized, gothic font with a gold and brown color scheme. It is set against a background of swirling, ethereal blue and white smoke or mist. In the upper right, a large, pale full moon is visible. To the left of the logo, several skeletal figures are depicted in various poses of aggression. In the upper right, a large, horned, metallic creature with a skull-like face looms. The central figure is a warrior in a red cape, holding a sword and a shield with a red star emblem. To the right, a smaller figure with a glowing yellow orb is visible. The overall scene is one of intense action and fantasy.

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The title "CLAWS OF THE TYRANT" is written in a bold, blocky, green font with a black outline. It is set within a decorative green frame that has a metallic, riveted appearance. The background of the entire cover is a detailed illustration of a fantasy battle scene. In the center, a warrior in a red cape and armor stands on a pile of rubble, holding a sword and a shield with a red star emblem. To the right, a smaller figure with a glowing yellow orb is visible. In the foreground, a large, red, scaly dragon with glowing blue eyes is shown. The background is filled with skeletal figures, a large horned creature, and a full moon.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

AUTHORS
Alexander Augunas, Rigby Bendele, and
Erin Roberts

ADDITIONAL WRITING
Joseph Blomquist and Sasha Laranoa Harving

DEVELOPMENT LEADS
Adam Daigle and Bill Fischer

ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Vanessa Hoskins

DESIGN LEAD
Michael Sayre

EDITING LEAD
Avi Kool

EDITORS
Felix Dritz, Patrick Hurley, Avi Kool,
Priscilla N. Lagares, Lynne M. Meyer, Zac
Moran, Ianara Natividad, Solomon St. John,
and Simone D. Sallé

COVER ARTIST
Mirco Paganessi

INTERIOR ARTISTS
Ivan Koritarev, Robert Lazzaretti,
Vira Linevych, Mayra Luna,
Alexander Nanitchkov, Luis Salas Lastra,
and Firat Solhan

ART DIRECTION
Sonja Morris

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Adriana Gasperi

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
James Jacobs

DIRECTOR OF NARRATIVE
Adam Daigle

PUBLISHER
Erik Mona



Paizo Inc.
15902 Woodinville-Redmond Rd NE,
Unit B
Woodinville, WA 98072-4572
paizo.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Gravelands Survivors	11
by Alexander Augunas	
Chapter 1: Rising to the Challenge	12
Chapter 2: Hunted	30
Ashes for Ozem	39
by Erin Roberts	
Ashes for Ozem	40
Of Blood and Faith	61
by Rigby Bendele	
Chapter 1: What Lies Beneath	62
Chapter 2: To Swear the Crimson Oath	78
Chapter 3: The Reckoning of Arazni	94
Vellumis Gazetteer	101
by Joseph Blomquist	



Adventure Toolbox

by Rigby Bendele, Sasha Laranoa Harving, and Erin Roberts

New Rules and Treasure

New Artifacts

Halcyon Speaker Feats

Knight Reclaimant Feats

Knight Vigilant Feats

Lastwall Sentry Feats

Magaambyan Attendant Feats

Creatures

Engerra

Garrholdion

Mirmicette

Moldering Steed

Raised Cavalry

Splinter Officer

Stelemora

Tallusian

NPCs

Arsiella Dei

Seldeg Bhedlis

109

109

110

111

112

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

124





INTRODUCTION

Claws of the Tyrant is an anthology of adventures set in and around the former nation of Lastwall, now known as the Gravelands. More specifically, the adventures follow the story of the goddess Arazni as she returns to the Gravelands, this time to ensure that a collection of powerful relics, the *Bloodstones of Arazni*, stay free from the hands of her former captor, Seldeg Bhedlis. After Arazni's escape from Geb, Seldeg abandoned his role as that nation's spymaster and now serves a new lord, Tar-Baphon. But Seldeg's loyalty to the Whispering Tyrant conceals his true motivations. Seldeg intends to use the *Bloodstones* (along with another relic, the *Chalice of Ozem*) to power a ritual that will forever alter the histories of both Arazni and Iomedae. By swapping the fates of the two goddesses, Seldeg believes he can "save" Arazni from her tragic past—and in turn, redeem himself.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventures in *Claws of the Tyrant* are thematically similar, in that all three focus on the interconnected histories of Tar-Baphon, Seldeg Bhedlis, and the goddesses Arazni and Iomedae. However, each adventure approaches this tale from a different angle. While the adventures are presented chronologically, with the events of one adventure informing those of the next, you don't need to play a given adventure to enjoy the others. If you do plan on playing all three of the anthology's adventures, simply keep in mind that the players will have to create a new set of PCs for each adventure.

Gravelands Survivors

The first adventure in this anthology, "Gravelands Survivors," is a survival-horror story for 1st-level PCs. The adventure follows the characters as they emerge from the crypt in which they took shelter during Tar-Baphon's destruction of Lastwall, nearly six years prior. The survivors carry with them one of the *Bloodstones of Arazni*, which a secretive faction within the church of Iomedae, the Crimson Keepers, had also hidden in the crypt. It's up to the PCs to guide their fellow survivors through the Gravelands until they reach a new haven for themselves and the *Bloodstone*.

Ashes for Ozem

In "Ashes for Ozem," players take on the roles of Whispering Way agents assembled by Seldeg Bhedlis to infiltrate Fort Ozem, where the graveknight believes another artifact, the *Chalice of Ozem*, has been secured.

Though the fort is purportedly abandoned, Seldeg has recently learned that the "ruins" are being used as a base of operations by the Chernasardo Rangers and their allies, the church of Iomedae and the Knights of Lastwall. Designed for 7th-level PCs, "Ashes for Ozem" gives players the opportunity to create characters whose motivations are evil—or at least morally ambiguous.

Of Blood and Faith

The anthology's final adventure, "Of Blood and Faith," follows a group of 18th-level characters as they work to interrupt Seldeg Bhedlis's ritual and put an end to the graveknight's machinations forever. After an uptick in undead activity throughout the Gravelands, the Knights of Lastwall call upon the heroes to investigate. The PCs quickly discover that Seldeg plans to use the *Bloodstones of Arazni* to switch the fates of Arazni and Iomedae. Should Seldeg succeed, his ritual will rewrite history—though perhaps not in the way the graveknight intends.

THE STORY SO FAR

Arazni's story begins over 6,000 years ago, when she was still a mortal. Working alongside the Azlanti hero Aroden, who himself had not yet ascended to divinity, Arazni battled the evils that imperiled the ancient Arcadian nation of Xopatl. Upon her death in -1491 AR, Arazni's soul was judged and sent to Nirvana, where she eventually became an angel. When Aroden reunited with Arazni over two millennia later, the new god invited her to become his herald.

Centuries passed, and in the intervening years Arazni came to serve as the patron saint of the Knights of Ozem, a military order dedicated to defeating the Whispering Tyrant, Tar-Baphon. In 3818 AR, at the height of the Shining Crusade, the Knights summoned Arazni to lead them in battle. Fearful that the Tyrant might claw his way into the herald's mind, however, the Knights bound Arazni to their will, rather than request she join the battle of her own accord. Later, Tar-Baphon slew Arazni, flinging the herald's body among the ranks of the assembled knights.

After the Whispering Tyrant was finally defeated in 3827 AR, the Knights of Ozem laid Arazni to rest in Lastwall's capital of Vigil. She remained there only three short years, however, before a contingent of knights led by Seldeg Bhedlis rode off to Geb in an attempt to topple that nation from within. In retaliation, the Ghost King corrupted the errant knights, transforming them into undead creatures known as graveknights, and ordered them to steal Arazni's body from Vigil. The

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

Timeline

-1491 AR	The mortal hero Arazni dies. Her soul is judged, and she's transformed into an angel.
1121 AR	Arazni becomes the herald of Aroden.
2502 AR	Dwarven refugees establish the city of Ozem near Ustalav's southern border, inviting other ancestries to join them.
3203 AR	Tar-Baphon returns as a lich and begins to conquer Ustalav, gathering human, orc, and undead troops under his command.
3207 AR	Ozem falls to the forces of Tar-Baphon. The surviving knights form the Knights of Ozem, naming Arazni (then a demigod) as their patron saint.
3754 AR	Taldor, Kraggodan, and the Knights of Ozem launch the Shining Crusade against Tar-Baphon.
3801 AR	The Shining Crusade establishes a beachhead in the (then) Ustalavic town of Vellumis.
3816 AR	The mortal hero Iomedae rises to lead the Knights of Ozem in their struggle against the forces of Tar-Baphon.
3818 AR	The Knights of Ozem summon and bind Arazni to fight for them.
3823 AR	Tar-Baphon slays Arazni during the Battle of Three Sorrows.
3827 AR	The Shining Crusade reaches Gallowspire and imprisons Tar-Baphon. Later, the Knights of Ozem inter the body of Arazni in Vigil.
3828 AR	The crusaders establish a permanent presence near Tar-Baphon's prison, Gallowspire, founding the Taldan province of Lastwall.
3832 AR	Iomedae passes the Test of the <i>Starstone</i> , becoming the most recent mortal to acquire a spark of divinity. Aroden selects Iomedae as his new herald.
3889 AR	A group of errant Knights of Ozem infiltrates the nation of Geb. They are captured and transformed into graveknights, becoming the Council Libertine.
3890 AR	Led by Seldeg Bhedlis, the Council Libertine steals Arazni's body from Vigil.

3891 AR	The Ghost King Geb raises Arazni as a lich. Arazni serves as the unwilling co-ruler of Geb for the next 800 years.
4081 AR	Lastwall splits from Taldor during the Even-Tongued Conquest, becoming an independent nation.
4606 AR	The god Aroden dies. Iomedae adopts many of his followers, becoming Iomedae the Inheritor.
4719 AR	Arazni escapes from Geb. She heads to Lastwall in search of her <i>Bloodstones</i> and under the suspicion that Tar-Baphon will soon escape his prison.
4719 AR (CONT.)	Tar-Baphon finishes development of <i>Radiant Fire</i> , a magical super-weapon combining the powers of vitality and void energy. He uses <i>Radiant Fire</i> to escape Gallowspire and destroy the Lastwall capital of Vigil. Lastwall is officially conquered by Tar-Baphon, becoming the Gravelands. Surviving knights gather at Vellumis and rename themselves the Knights of Lastwall.
4719 AR (CONT.)	Arazni battles Tar-Baphon. During the fight, the Tyrant activates his <i>Radiant Fire</i> , destroying Arazni but freeing her from the bonds of lichdom. Arazni ascends to divinity.
4719 AR (CONT.)	A group of heroes breaks Tar-Baphon's siege of Absalom, sacrificing themselves but preventing Tar-Baphon from using <i>Radiant Fire</i> ever again. The Whispering Tyrant retreats to the Isle of Terror.
4720 AR	The Knights of Lastwall hold Vellumis against hordes of undead, using the city as the locus of their evacuation efforts.
4723 AR	After falling from Geb's favor, Seldeg Bhedlis travels to the Gravelands and pledges himself to Tar-Baphon.
4724 AR	Seldeg Bhedlis captures Iomedae scholar Addit Kalakin, from whom he learns the location of the <i>Bloodstones of Arazni</i> .
4725 AR	Present day. The Knights of Lastwall have spread throughout the Inner Sea region seeking allies in their battle against the Whispering Tyrant and his undead minions in the Gravelands. Seldeg Bhedlis prepares his ritual to swap the fates of the goddesses Arazni and Iomedae.

graveknights succeeded in their mission, and a year and a day later, Arazni arose as a lich.

With the seed of doubt about the Knights of Ozem already planted in her mind, Arazni grew to detest her former allies. As co-ruler of Geb, Arazni the lich became a cruel and calculating tyrant, even as she sought to escape the indignity of her undead existence. The Ghost King's hold on Arazni proved unbreakable, however, and her bodyguards—the Council Libertine, made up of the very graveknights who had stolen her corpse from Vigil centuries before—hunted her down each time she tried to flee.

Finally, in 4719 AR, Arazni managed to evade her captors long enough to travel to Lastwall, where Tar-Baphon sought to escape his own imprisonment. Working alongside a group of mortal heroes, Arazni manipulated the Whispering Tyrant into destroying her body with a powerful magic known as the *Radiant Fire*. Arazni was incinerated in the blast, but the devastation freed her soul from Geb's control. Not long afterward, Arazni ascended to the status of a god.

When news of Arazni's escape and subsequent ascension spread, Seldeg Bhedlis's fortunes in Geb fell. Arrogant even in failure, the graveknight fled to Lastwall and began devising a plan to redeem his blighted soul. During the ritual that had transformed Arazni into a lich, Geb removed Arazni's visceral organs and placed them inside four canopic jars known as the *Bloodstones of Arazni*. When Seldeg's agents captured Addit Kalakin, an Iomedean scholar researching the artifacts' whereabouts, the graveknight learned that a secretive faction within the church of Iomedae, the Crimson Keepers, had taken the *Bloodstones* into their custody. Before the Keepers could secure the relics, however, Tar-Baphon escaped his prison and destroyed the nation of Lastwall, along with the Keepers and their knowledge of the *Bloodstones'* locations.

The *Bloodstones* are all that's left of Arazni's mortal remains, and Seldeg believes he can harness their power to erase the goddess's history. By combining the *Bloodstones* with the *Chalice of Ozem*, an artifact tied to another goddess, Iomedae, Seldeg intends to alter the

past so that the stories of Arazni and Iomedae reverse. Whereas once Arazni fell and Iomedae was uplifted in her place, if Seldeg's ritual succeeds, Iomedae will fall instead, leaving a void in the cosmic order for Arazni—with Seldeg at her side—to fill.

GLOSSARY OF NAMES

The following names appear throughout *Claws of the Tyrant*. GMs are encouraged to study them before running the anthology's adventures.

Addit Kalakin (inquisitive female human scholar 12): A scholar researching the *Bloodstones of Arazni*, Addit was recently captured by Seldeg Bhedlis, who learned about the artifacts' whereabouts from her. Seldeg's underling, a skulltaker named Onturat, has since stolen Addit's memories and identity.

Arazni: The goddess of dignity, survival, and unwilling undeath, Arazni the Unyielding is the former herald of Aroden. She was killed by Tar-Baphon, then forcibly transformed into a lich before freeing herself and ascending to godhood. She harbors resentment toward both the Knights of Ozem and Aroden's most recent herald, Iomedae.

Aylunna Varvatos (respected female human cleric of Iomedae 14): A survivor of the destruction of Vigil, Aylunna remains an influential leader among the Knights of Lastwall.

Beirivelle Starshine (humble female human redeemer bard of Shelyn 11): A knight vigilant and recruiter for the Knights of Lastwall, Beirivelle has long suspected that another knight, Clarethe Iomedar, is in contact with the goddess Arazni.

Bloodstones of Arazni: The *Bloodstones* are four canopic jars containing Arazni's organs, which were removed from her during her transformation into a lich. It's said that whoever possesses all four *Bloodstones* can control Arazni. Arazni can't touch the artifacts unless they're given to her freely.

Castle Firrine: When Lastwall fell to the forces of the Whispering Tyrant, the Knights of Ozem were forced to abandon Castle Firrine. A group of orcs from the Burning Sun Hold now occupies the keep. The orcs' leader, **Chargug Brightsword** (ambitious male orc aspirant chief 19) sees it as his duty to protect the *Heart Bloodstone of Arazni*, which is secured at the keep.

Chalice of Ozem: During the Battle of Three Sorrows in 3823 AR, Iomedae used the *Chalice of Ozem* to defeat Erum-Hel, one of Tar-Baphon's lieutenants. The chalice has since become a minor artifact tied to both Iomedae and Arazni.

Chernasardo Rangers: The Chernasardo Rangers are freedom fighters who oppose the armies of Molthune (and more recently, the undead forces of Tar-Baphon). A group of the rangers currently operates out of Fort Ozem, an abandoned Knights of Ozem stronghold in Southern Fangwood.

Clarethe Iomedar (fervent nonbinary human vindicator 15): Known as the Sunset Angel, Clarethe Iomedar is one of the most influential members of the Knights of Lastwall. The first knight to have sworn the Crimson Oath, she leads the Crimson Reclaimers and is secretly in communication with that order's patron god, Arazni.

Corlach Keep: A fortress along the Pineflow River, Corlach Keep was abandoned during the destruction of Lastwall. A vault beneath the keep contains the *Spleen Bloodstone of Arazni*.

Crimson Keepers: Originally a secretive faction within the Knights of Ozem, the Crimson Keepers were absorbed into the church of Iomedae shortly before Tar-Baphon's *Radiant Fire* destroyed most of the order. The Keepers saw themselves as the custodians of Arazni's mortal remains, the *Bloodstones of Arazni*.

Crimson Reclaimers: Along with Shining Sentinels, the Crimson Reclaimers are one of the leading factions of the Knights of Lastwall. The Crimson Oath sworn by its members is secretly an oath to Arazni.

Dortrot Ranch: A horse ranch just south of the Path River, Dortrot Ranch persists despite Tar-Baphon's continued occupation of the Gravelands. It is currently operated by **Hendle Dortrot** (stubborn male human rancher 14) and is the site of one of the four *Bloodstones of Arazni*.

Fort Ozem: A supposedly abandoned fort in Southern Fangwood, Fort Ozem was once home to the mortal Iomedae. Today, the fort is controlled by the Chernasardo Rangers, who safeguard the *Chalice of Ozem* hidden beneath the fort. Chernasardo warden **Arsiella Dei** (dedicated female aiuvirin ranger 9) currently serves as commander of Fort Ozem.

Gravelands: The Gravelands encompass the nation formerly known as Lastwall. When Tar-Baphon escaped Gallowspire, he commanded his forces to slaughter anyone who escaped his *Radiant Fire*. Most of the region is now inhabited by undead.

Hammer Rock: Built atop a hill overlooking the Path River, the fortress of Hammer Rock was reduced to ruins by Tar-Baphon's *Radiant Fire* in 4719 AR. Seldeg Bhedlis has chosen Hammer Rock as the site for his ritual to reverse the fates of Arazni and Iomedae.

Iomedae: The god of holy crusaders and divine righteousness, Iomedae was once the mortal general of the Knights of Ozem. She fought alongside Arazni during the Shining Crusade. After the crusaders sealed Tar-Baphon in his prison at Gallowspire, Iomedae took the Test of the *Starstone* and became a god.

Knights of Lastwall: Previously known as the Knights of Ozem, the Knights of Lastwall changed their name after the nation of Lastwall was invaded by Tar-Baphon and the Whispering Way. The Knights are chivalrous warriors sworn to protect the innocent and fight the forces of evil, specifically the Whispering

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



bard, investigator, or rogue a chance to shine, although the adventure isn't appropriate for characters who must follow edicts of good, such as certain clerics or champions. "Of Blood and Faith," on the other hand, is a perfect fit for such heroic, good-hearted characters.

Faiths

Faith plays an important role in *Claws of the Tyrant*, so which god a character reveres (if any) is more significant than it might be in other adventures. Theoretically, characters of any faith could have found themselves in the crypt where "Gravelands Survivors" begins, but because that adventure assumes the PCs volunteer for the important task of shepherding the *Bloodstone of Arazni* and their fellow survivors to safety, gods whose edicts and anathemas would be opposed to that mission might prove troublesome.

In "Ashes for Ozem," the PCs are evil—or at least morally ambiguous enough to accept a mission from Seldeg Bhedlis! As a consequence, characters in that adventure might revere gods associated with undeath, such as Urgathoa, or demon lords like Kabriri or Zura. An interesting choice for an undead character might be Arazni: because Arazni harbors some sympathy for those unwillingly transformed into undead, she isn't overly concerned about her worshippers' morality and might be willing to grant her blessings to one of the PCs.

"Of Blood and Faith" assumes the PCs are either members of the Knights of Lastwall or their close allies, making it unlikely that any of the characters would be a follower of a god opposed to that organization's ideals. That said, worship of a particularly deity isn't mandatory among the Knights of Lastwall, and the Knights welcome people of all beliefs, provided they are willing to champion the cause of good. Arazni is an obvious choice, as is Iomedae, although followers of the latter goddess might complicate negotiations with Arazni when the PCs meet her face-to-face during the adventure. Indeed, followers of any god generally regarded as "good" but whose edicts are opposed to those of Arazni could make winning her favor more difficult. On the other hand, certain groups might find the roleplaying opportunities created by these opposing viewpoints to be worth the trouble they cause!

Skills

All three adventures in *Claws of the Tyrant* benefit from parties with a balanced skill set, but depending on the adventure you plan to play, some skills might be more useful than others. At least one of the characters in "Gravelands Survivors" should be trained in Survival, for example. As "Ashes for Ozem" is an adventure focused on infiltration, skills like Deception, Stealth, and Thievery are particularly useful. Parties attempting to disrupt Seldeg Bhedlis's ritual in "Of Blood and Faith" might struggle unless at least one of them

has legendary proficiency with Crafting or Religion. Knowledge skills, particularly Arcana, Religion, and Lore skills like Arazni Lore, Iomedae Lore, or Undead Lore, are handy in all three of the adventures.

Archetypes

Multiclass archetypes, most common archetypes, and any uncommon or rare archetypes allowed by the GM should work fine in any of the adventures in *Claws of the Tyrant*. Of course, since the PCs in "Gravelands Survivors" begin play at 1st level, they won't be able to choose an archetype until they advance to level 2 halfway through that adventure. "Ashes for Ozem" encourages players to take on the role of evil characters, giving them the opportunity to try out archetypes from *Pathfinder Book of the Dead*, including reanimator and undead master, as well archetypes that allow you to play an undead character, such as the ghost, ghoul, mummy, and vampire dedication archetypes.

The exorcist, hallowed necromancer, soul warden, and undead slayer archetypes, also from *Book of the Dead*, are good choices for characters in "Of Blood and Faith." Players interested in creating a character who is a member of the Knights of Lastwall might instead choose knight reclaimant (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Character Guide* 95), knight vigilant (*Character Guide* 94), or Lastwall sentry (*Pathfinder Lost Omens World Guide* 47). Additional higher-level options for these Knights of Lastwall-focused archetypes can be found in *Pathfinder Lost Omens Knights of Lastwall*, as well as in the Adventure Toolbox starting on page 111.

Gear

As "Gravelands Survivors" is an adventure for 1st-level characters, PCs in that adventure have the typical amount of wealth (15 gold pieces) with which to purchase their starting equipment. If you're playing one of the anthology's other two adventures, the players will need to purchase magical gear for their characters.

If you are creating brand-new characters for "Ashes for Ozem," you can either allow the players to spend a lump sum of 720 gp (with no item being of 6th level or higher), or you can allow them to pick their items. With the latter method, each player selects a number of common treasures as detailed on page 61 of *Pathfinder GM Core*. The characters might also have access to uncommon or rare items, at the GM's discretion.

When making characters for "Of Blood and Faith," players have a lump sum of 45,000 gp with which to outfit their characters, with no item being 17th-level or higher. Alternatively, you can allow the players to pick items as described in *GM Core*. As this adventure assumes that the PCs are accomplished heroes used to battling the undead, you might choose to give them access to any of the uncommon and rare magic items from *Book of the Dead* or *Knights of Lastwall*.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

Chapter 1: Rising to the Challenge.....12

A group of survivors of Tar-Baphon's invasion have been sheltering in a crypt beneath the town of Yua's Hope for 6 years when tragedy strikes. At risk of starvation, these survivors must abandon their sanctuary to explore what's left of Lastwall, gather resources, and find a new haven for both themselves and the ancient relic entombed along with them.

Chapter 2: Hunted.....30

The survivors attract the attention of a ghoul hunter sent to Yua's Hope to investigate rumors of a powerful relic hidden beneath the town. As the group heads to the safety of the port city of Vellumis, they must overcome the dangers of the Gravelands and face down their pursuer.

What Came Before

"Gravelands Survivors" is a survival-horror story, and as such, it relies on the interactions of its characters—the PCs and the NPC survivors who accompany them—for much of its impact. While there are certainly many combats to engage in (or avoid), be sure to allow time for roleplaying opportunities as well, as these scenes will give the players a chance to explore the survivors' relationships with one another.

As 1st-level characters, the PCs won't have much in terms of class abilities, feats, or magic items to define themselves. Instead, when making characters for "Gravelands Survivors," try asking each of the players one or more of the following questions:

- Were you born and raised in the town of Yua's Hope? Or were you simply a visitor caught in the wrong place at the wrong time?
- How old were you the night the undead came to Yua's Hope? What circumstances allowed you to take refuge in the crypt? Were you forced to leave anyone behind?
- Do you carry a special keepsake to remind you of your life before the undead arrived?
- What is your relationship with the other survivors? Which one of them do you like the most? The least?
- What do you look forward to doing once all this is over? Or have you already given up hope of ever seeing the sun again?

THE FIGHT TO SURVIVE

When the nation of Lastwall was founded centuries ago, one of its mandates was to ensure the ancient necromancer Tar-Baphon would never escape Gallowspire, the fortress tower where he had been entombed. But when the Great Seal of the tyrant's prison shattered, Tar-Baphon devastated Lastwall, transforming it into the region known today as the Gravelands. Even now, however, life within the realm persists, despite the hordes of undead that roam the countryside. "Gravelands Survivors" follows a group of refugees as they struggle to transport an artifact of divine power, the *Lung Bloodstone of Arazni*, to safety and find a new home for themselves.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Gravelands Survivors" is designed for four characters.

1

The PCs begin this adventure at 1st level.

2

The PCs should reach 2nd level by the start of Chapter 2.

3

The PCs should reach 3rd level by the end of the adventure.



CHAPTER 1: RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

The town of Yua's Hope was once a quiet and prosperous settlement built upon a ruin from the time of the Shining Crusade. That ruin, an ancient settlement called Mordesha, was constructed on land granted to the Knights of Ozem by the Grand Prince of Taldor so that the crusaders could keep vigil over Gallowspire and the Whispering Tyrant. Mordesha was abandoned in 3942 AR after a portal to the Void was opened within its crypts by the Whispering Way, who intended to use the energies released by the portal to raise an army of undeath. After failing to seal the portal, the crusaders razed Mordesha, hoping time would eventually close the portal and heal the land. Nearly a thousand years later, a group of explorers from the Pathfinder Society rediscovered the crypt and sealed the portal once and for all. Not long afterward, the Knights of Ozem reestablished the settlement, now called Yua's Hope, and the town thrived over the next three years. Its prospects had never looked brighter.

Then Tar-Baphon escaped Gallowspire and engulfed Lastwall in *Radiant Fire*.

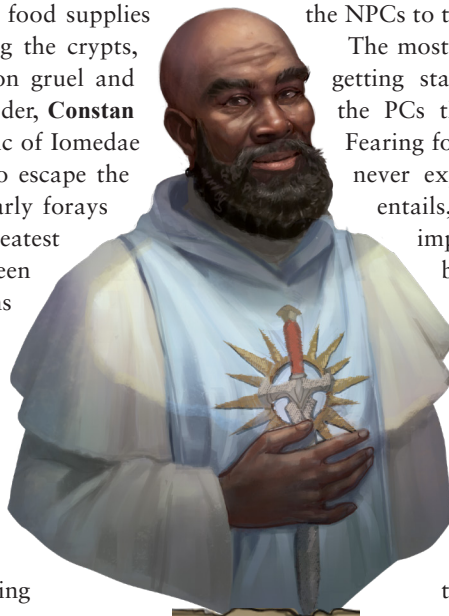
When scouts got wind that undead had begun shambling onto shore from across Lake Encarthan, the civilians of Lastwall scrambled for shelter even as the Knights of Ozem tried and failed to keep the nation free from the Whispering Tyrant's grasp. Most of these refugees were discovered by the undead, often while hunkering down in their own basements, and were subsequently reanimated as corpse soldiers in Tar-Baphon's unholy army.

The PCs and their fellow survivors are among the few who escaped this fate. When the leaders of Yua's Hope gave the order to take shelter, a small group fled into the crypts of Mordesha, the very vaults the Pathfinder Society had plumbed seven years before. This decision proved fortuitous, as centuries of hosting a portal to the Void had imbued the crypts with necrotic energy, concealing the survivors' life force from the Whispering Tyrant's minions.



While the PCs survived the Tyrant's initial invasion, their existences since then have not been easy. In fact, one might describe their last six years as a hopeless tragedy or nightmare from which they've been unable to awaken. The survivors' food supplies ran out mere weeks after entering the crypts, forcing them to subsist entirely on gruel and water conjured by the group's leader, **Constan Russi** (dedicated male human cleric of Iomedae 3). What's more, their attempts to escape the crypts proved fruitless, as their early forays aboveground confirmed their greatest fear: the town of Yua's Hope had been overrun, its once-proud citizens replaced with slaving undead.

Now, the year is 4725 AR. For over half a decade, the PCs and their fellow survivors have huddled in the crypts of Mordessa, clinging to life but slowly growing to envy the dead. As the adventure begins, undead comes for the survivors again, forcing the PCs to either make a last-ditch attempt to escape Yua's Hope or surrender themselves to the Whispering Tyrant for all eternity.



Constan Russi

GETTING STARTED

Each PC should have an idea of what they were doing in Yua's Hope before they sought shelter in the crypts of Mordessa. Six years have passed since then, so some PCs might have been adolescents who came of age in hiding, or were civilians who lacked their current skills when Tar-Baphon's forces invaded. Whatever the case, the PCs' lives within the crypts have likely been fraught with worry about discovery and filled with woe for the luxuries they now lack.

Along with the PCs, a total of 15 NPCs took shelter in the crypts. After six years forced to spend every waking moment together, the survivors have gotten to know each other all too well. Before the adventure begins, take time to introduce this cast of characters, as the horror elements of "Gravelands Survivors" might lose their some of their impact if the players don't care about the fate of their fellow survivors. (Keep in mind that while the PCs are familiar with each other and their fellow survivors, the players aren't!) A description of each NPC can be found in the Meeting the Survivors section below.

As the adventure begins, the survivors prepare for the funeral of their leader, Dame Talia Gildar, who died in her sleep the previous evening. While Dame Talia's death was peaceful (and not entirely unexpected, as she was well into her 70s before entering the crypts), the survivors relied on the former Knight of Ozem to be a bastion of strength, and her passing shakes the

tiny community's resolve. The events surrounding the preparations for Talia's funeral begin on page 15. While none of those encounters are required to complete the adventure, running them is an easy way to introduce the NPCs to the players.

The most important thing you must do before getting started, however, is to assign one of the PCs the role of Constan Russi's second. Fearing for the chosen PC's safety, Constan has never explained much about what this role entails, only that he's the guardian of an important secret, a burden the PC must bear should he perish. As a faithful Iomedae, Constan chooses for his second whichever PC has the strongest affiliation with the Inheritor—if multiple PCs have similar connections with Iomedae, roll a secret flat check for each PC and give the responsibility to the winner. Once you've determined who Constan's second will be, share the following information with the PC.

- Constan Russi was originally second to Sir **Nalleth Clearwater** (devout male halfling cavalier of Iomedae 6), a knight entrusted with a state secret of the nation of Lastwall.
- Whatever this secret might be, it is kept within a redwood chest hidden in Constan's quarters. Constan wears a key to the chest around his neck. As Constan's second, the PC is entrusted with a copy of this key, but Constan has instructed the PC to open the chest only upon his death.
- The PC has kept Constan's secret the entire time the survivors have been in the crypts of Mordessa.

MEETING THE SURVIVORS

The PCs are among a group of people who fled into the crypts of Mordessa as Tar-Baphon's undead forces approached the town of Yua's Hope. For the past six years, these 15 people have lived in the crypts alongside the PCs. The makeshift bunker isn't large, and the PCs have had ample time to get to know everyone they've sheltered with, so take the time to introduce these characters to the players before the adventure begins.

The Dwarf Smith: Before the arrival of the Whispering Tyrant, **Rokvel Hardbrow** (contemplative female dwarf blacksmith 1) was Yua's Hope's resident blacksmith, specializing in the crafting of breastplates for crusading knights. Of all the survivors, Rokvel is the least concerned with living underground, but lightless years with little to do but self-reflect resulted in Rokvel realizing she was a woman. "Rokvel" is a gender-neutral name in Dwarven, so she decided to keep it. She enjoys logic puzzles but has little patience for those who don't (or can't) carry their own weight.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



The Reformed Raider: Garaag Sunbrand (standoffish male orc laborer 1) was accompanying a group of Belkzen raiders into Lastwall when the Whispering Tyrant's forces arrived. The freshest warrior in his hold, Garaag has never seen true battle and still feels shame for fleeing the undead rather than dying alongside his fellow warriors. Garaag is known for his standoffishness and short temper (a trait made worse by constant hunger). Since entering the crypts, he has struggled to cooperate with people from outside his hold. However, the survivors have come to rely on Garaag's strength whenever heavy lifting needs doing, which brings him great pride.

The Fox Scouts: The kitsune **Jono Brushpaw** (aloof male kitsune ranger 1) and his life partner **Yiluva** (fierce nonbinary kitsune ranger 1) have ranged Lastwall since they were kits. When Tar-Baphon's forces arrived on Lastwall's shores, the Brushpaws and their rascal children **Retsnav** (shy female kitsune nomad 0) and **Retsnov** (rambunctious male kitsune nomad 0) warned as many settlements as they could, including Yua's Hope. For their bravery, the kitsune were offered a place within the crypts, and the family has sheltered there ever since. When it became clear the survivors' supplies would soon run out, the Brushpaws elected to spend as much time as possible in their fox forms, so as to consume less food. They now communicate primarily by pawing pictures in the dirt or waving their tails in a crude approximation of sign language. Retsnav and Retsnov were 10 years old when they entered the crypts and have recently been going through an unruly phase of adolescence.

The Keeper's Second: A devout Iomedaeen, Constan Russi has spent the last six years delivering sermons of hope to the forlorn survivors. He is a serious, contemplative man, but he offers kind wisdom to anyone in need of advice. The survivors owe their continued existence to Constan's magically conjured gruel, and his death at the start of Chapter 1 destabilizes the status quo, forcing the group to brave the dangers of the Gravelands. Unbeknownst to all but a single PC, Constan was second to former Crimson Keeper Sir Nalleth Clearwater, who swore to defend an ancient relic hidden in Yua's Hope.

The Orphan: Both of **Marko Blightender's** (brooding male human teenager 0) mothers were Knights of Ozem who were in the field when Tar-Baphon's forces laid siege to Lastwall. Everyone assumes the worst for them, although Marko holds out hope that someday his mothers will return. Marko was only eight when he took shelter in the crypts and is now growing like

a weed through the cracks of a cobblestone road. Defiant of authority, he's quick to remind the other survivors that they aren't his parents. Much of Marko's belligerence, however, stems from his concerns that he's growing larger, and every bite he takes means less food for his fellow survivors.

The Retired Leader: Before Tar-Baphon destroyed Vigil with *Radiant Fire*, the venerable Dame **Talia Gildar** (devoted female human strategic officer 5) was urged to retire and enjoy her golden years; she settled for coordinating the supply lines that ran through Yua's Hope. When the undead marched on her town, rather than picking up a sword, she agreed to accompany the survivors into the crypts, believing her cool head would help keep the frightened civilians from panicking. Dame Talia became a symbol of strength and determination for the other survivors, but her recent passing has shaken everyone's morale. The adventure begins as the survivors prepare for Dame Talia's funeral.

The Performers: The traveling quartet **Alyzo Shardhelm** (vain male human singer-songwriter 1), **Crasian Pattertap** (uncaring male halfling vocalist 1), and siblings **Kleb** (mischievous female goblin banjoist 1) and **Bicky** (impulsive female goblin percussionist 1) took shelter in Yua's Hope the same night the Brushpaws arrived with their dire warning that undead were invading Lastwall. In the six years since, the Querulous Quartet's signature melodies—which combine Alyzo's humorously petulant lyrics, Crasian's sardonic delivery, and Kleb and Bicky's feverish improvising—have buoyed the survivors' spirits. While the performers are careful not to play too often, lest the music betray their location to the undead aboveground, the other survivors enjoy the release of tension everyone feels when the Querulous Quartet premieres their newest song.

The Unlucky Chef: The former chef at the Hope's Breath Inn in Yua's Hope, **Hurdauw Pulsoma** (anxious female human chef 1), discovered her no-good, cheat of a husband had plans to run off with another man the same night Tar-Baphon's forces attacked. Not long after, Hurdauw realized she was pregnant. Six years on, Hurdauw still grapples with the fact that the father of her son **Jystolo** (curious male human youngster -1) is likely dead. Though she is a kind and hard-working individual, her nervous energy often rubs off on the other survivors. Thankfully, Constan Russi has always offered Hurdauw an understanding ear, and everyone knows she's fallen for the priest—everyone except Constan, that is.



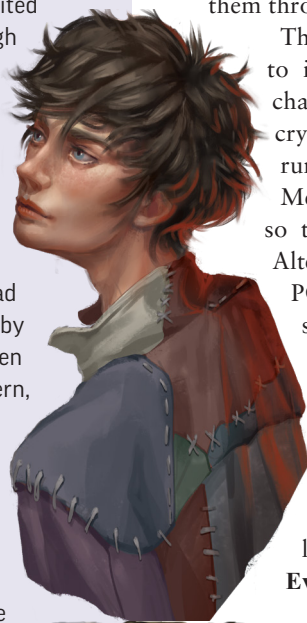
Rokvel Hardbrow

LOGISTICS OF SURVIVAL

When running "Gravelands Survivors," it's important to remember that the PCs and their fellow survivors have had to make do with extremely limited supplies for the past six years. Although originally the crypts were well stocked with food and water, these rations ran out a few weeks after the undead invaded. Since then, the survivors have been forced to rely on Constan Russi's magic to sustain them. Aside from the occasional rat or handful of berries snatched during an aboveground foray, the survivors have had nothing to eat beyond the gruel conjured by Constan's daily castings of *create food*. Even so, starvation remains a constant concern, and the adults often take turns fasting, especially now that Marko, Jystolo, and the younger Brushpaws are growing older. For these desperate survivors, the notion of eating to one's fill is nothing but a distant memory.

Other luxuries are similarly scarce. The survivors own nothing other than the items they brought with them when they took shelter in the crypts. Under the tutelage of Rokvel Hardbrow, they've learned to repair or repurpose broken items so that nothing goes to waste. Even seemingly worthless items like a scrap of cloth or bent iron nail hold value to the survivors. Most everything in the crypts is shared communally, although individuals might have a few cherished possessions—usually keepsakes from their time before the undead invasion—that they still call their own.

Light within the crypts is provided by three gemstones enchanted with *everlight* spells. One of these gems is kept in a communal meeting space near the crypt's entrance. The other two are passed from survivor to survivor as needed. (Of course, all the survivors are familiar with the crypts and can negotiate them reasonably well, even in total darkness.) When the survivors are forced to leave the crypts later in the adventure, the PCs are free to take the *everlight* gems with them, although they might want to leave one or more for survivors who choose not to travel with them.



Marko Blightender

her funeral. While the mood in the crypts is somber (even more than usual), the survivors are determined to pay their respects to the woman who unfailingly guided them through the hardships of the past six years.

The following encounters are designed to introduce the players to the NPCs their characters have gotten to know while in the crypts. Feel free to give the players a brief rundown of the NPCs (as described in the Meeting the Survivors section on page 13) so they can decide who they want to help. Alternatively, Constan Russi might assign the PCs various tasks based on their individual strengths. In either case, the encounters can be played in whatever order you choose, and none are required to complete the rest of the adventure.

Take note of how the PCs relate to the various NPCs, as this might influence their interactions with these individuals later in the adventure, especially during **Event 7: Keeping the Peace**.

Event 1: Unknown Epitaph

The PCs find former blacksmith Rokvel Hardbrow working in the sepulchre where Dame Talia will be laid to rest later that evening. The sarcophagus Rokvel has selected for Talia's remains has never been used and thus lacks an inscription, and now the dwarf struggles with how to begin. She is distracted by the Brushpaws, who are ostensibly here to help but have little experience with such things. To make matters worse, the younger Brushpaws don't quite comprehend the gravity of Talia's passing, and their parents struggle to contain the rambunctious kitsune children.

The PCs can help Rokvel compose Dame Talia's epitaph by succeeding at a DC 15 Religion or appropriate Lore check. A PC can offer to carve the inscription themselves, but Rokvel is familiar with all the survivors' skills and refuses to let anyone make the attempt unless they are trained in Crafting. Finishing the inscription to Rokvel's standards requires a successful DC 17 Crafting check. Alternatively, the PCs can entertain the Brushpaw children, giving Rokvel time to work, by succeeding at a DC 13 Performance or DC 15 Diplomacy check.

Reward: Award the PCs 10 XP each for helping Rokvel complete Dame Talia's epitaph.

Event 2: Work Continues

While the rest of the survivors get ready for Dame Talia's funeral, Garaag Sunbrand and Marko Blightender work together to shore up a crumbling wall at the far end of the crypts, a project Talia made a high priority before her passing. Both Garaag and Marko are upset they can't help more directly, but Garaag recognizes

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

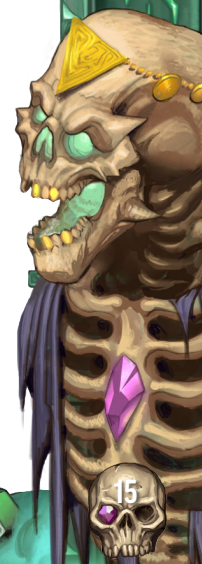
OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

PREPARING FOR FAREWELL

The adventure begins the morning after the death of Dame Talia Gilder, a former Knight of Ozem who has served as the survivors' leader and spiritual mainstay for the entirety of their time within the crypts. Talia's passing shakes the survivors to their core, but once the news sets in, the community comes together to prepare





his skills are put to best use here. Marko, on the other hand, sulks atop a closed sarcophagus, tossing pebbles at the wall while Garaag works.

To his credit, Garaag remains patient with Marko, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 13 Perception check to Sense Motive recognizes it's only a matter of time before Garaag snaps at the boy for his laziness. (The two might even come to blows if the situation is allowed to escalate.) The PCs can hurry the project along by succeeding at a DC 15 Athletics or Crafting check. Alternatively, a character can attempt a DC 15 Intimidation check to shame Marko into getting to work or a DC 17 Diplomacy check to keep Garaag calm despite Marko's lack of effort.

Reward: Award the PCs 10 XP each for helping Garaag and Marko shore up the wall.

Event 3: Preparing the Body

In the crypt that served as Dame Talia's personal quarters, Constan Russi prepares Talia's body for the funeral, while Hurdauw Pulsoma sorts through her personal effects. The two work mostly in silence, although a character who succeeds at a DC 13 Perception check to Sense Motive notices that the grief-stricken Hurdauw often turns to Constan for comfort, distracting the cleric from his work. Meanwhile, Jystolo inches ever closer to Talia's remains—despite having grown up in the crypts, the young boy is unfamiliar with death and suspects Dame Talia might be only sleeping.

The PCs can help Constan by succeeding at a DC 15 Religion check to say a prayer over Dame Talia or otherwise prepare her remains. At the GM's discretion, a different skill might be used in place of Religion; a character trained in Crafting or Warfare Lore, for example, could help by polishing Talia's breastplate and sword. Alternatively, a character who succeeds at a DC 13 Diplomacy or Performance check can comfort Hurdauw or distract Jystolo, allowing Constan to finish his work in peace.

Reward: Award the PCs 10 XP each for helping Constan prepare Dame Talia's body.

Event 4: A Funeral Dirge

The Querulous Quartet's offbeat style leaves little room for elegies. Though Dame Talia's death saddens the musicians, they struggle to come up with a song appropriate for her funeral. Alyzo sits by himself in one corner, jotting down (and summarily crossing out) snippets of lyrics with a stick of charcoal. Meanwhile, the goblin siblings Bicky and Kleb make a terrible

racket as they compose the tune. As his fellow band members work, Crasian attempts in vain to take a nap. Convincing the musicians to work together and finish their song requires three successful DC 13 Diplomacy or Intimidation checks (one each for Alyzo, Bicky and Kleb, and Crasian). A PC can come up with their own song by succeeding at a DC 15 Performance check. Alternatively, a PC can inspire the musicians by quoting an appropriate passage of scripture with a successful DC 17 Religion check.

Reward: Award the PCs 10 XP each for helping the Querulous Quartet compose Dame Talia's funeral dirge.



Bicky

CATASTROPHE IN THE CRYPTS

The survivors spend the remainder of the day finishing their preparations for the funeral. That night, they gather in a wing of the crypts to say goodbye to Dame Talia Gilder. Clad in crusader armor and Lastwall finery, the stalwart woman looks fully prepared for one last quest into the afterlife. Constan Russi stands before the survivors in his white and crimson Iomedean cassock. Opening a battered copy of the *Acts of Iomedae* to a relevant passage, he begins his requiem.

"Friends. Fellow survivors. Family," Constan Russi says, his eyes squinting in the sepulchre's dim light. "Tonight we celebrate the life and legacy of Dame Talia Gildar, Knight of Ozem and crusader of Lastwall. Under her guidance, this congregation has survived many long nights since the undead first arrived on our shores. Perhaps neither comfortably nor peacefully, but we endure because of the strength and wisdom of Dame Talia. Now the time has come for the Lady of Graves to beckon Talia to the Great Beyond, where she will join Iomedae's glorious host against the forces of evil.

"I know I speak for all of us when I attest to the late Dame's character. Talia was an honorable crusader and a wise knight. A caring friend and a comforting confidant. To some, she was as a mother."

Voices murmur in agreement as Constan continues his sermon. "When I reflect upon my time with Talia, I think of the Fourth Act of Iomedae, and how Dame Talia's bravery mirrored that of the Inheritor in so many ways. As the Fourth Act reminds us, at the Second Battle of Encarthan, Iomedae faced a horde of undead wraiths. It was the dead of night, and she and her company were staring down the icy grasp of death. But rather than despair, Iomedae lifted her blade toward the sunless sky and evoked Lord Aroden's herald, Arazni. 'The night is cold and dark,' Iomedae proclaimed, 'but Heaven's sun burns brighter than the bleakest night.' As she declared, so the knights endured, and when reinforcements arrived at the break of dawn, not a soul had perished."



A chill runs down the spines of those in attendance, in strange contrast to the hopeful tone of Constan's words. If Constan notices the feeling, he seems to pay it no mind. "We find ourselves much like those knights, tired and fearful after awaiting rescue these six long years. But like the Inheritor, Dame Talia was always there to inspire us. She may be gone, but her words will never be forgotten. In this way, Talia will never truly leave us, not so long as we draw—"

"Look, Mama!" young Jystolo chirps. Tugging at his mother's sleeve, he points to the casket behind Constan Russi. "Talia's not dead!"

Shocked screams fill the sepulchre as the corpse of Dame Talia staggers to its feet inside its casket. Before anyone can act, the body lunges at Constan Russi, ripping out the priest's throat with its jaws.

Event 5: Catastrophe in the Crypts

Moderate 1

This encounter takes place in the crypts and is the only combat encounter located there. No map is provided, but you can draw out a simple, open sepulchre where Dame Talia would have been interred had her rest not been interrupted.

Creatures: Dame Talia Gildar has risen from the dead as a plague zombie, killing Constan Russi with a single bite. Four rounds after Constan dies, he also rises as a plague zombie. The two lash out at the survivors indiscriminately, although they focus their attacks on any PCs who engage the zombies in melee. While the PCs might be hesitant to attack their former friends, stress to the players that no sign of the people they once knew remains in the zombies' hate-filled eyes. Similarly, make it clear to the players that the wound Constan Russi suffered was instantly fatal, and that the priest is beyond any hope of saving.

PLAGUE ZOMBIES (2) CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Monster Core 356

Initiative Perception +3

Hazard: When Dame Talia attacks Constan Russi, the other NPCs bolt as one to the sepulchre's exit. The disorderly survivors make the room difficult terrain, although a PC can take charge of the situation by using an action with the auditory and linguistic traits and attempting a DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidation check. On a success, the survivors clear out of the room at the end of the round. If the PCs do not take any actions to help them organize, the other survivors clear out of the room at the end of the fourth round.

The Unliving Corpses: Once the plague zombies are defeated, the PCs can examine their bodies to figure out what happened. A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Medicine or Religion check to Recall Knowledge identifies that Dame Talia and Constan Russi show signs of zombie rot infection, although in both cases

the disease appears to have spread far more quickly than normal. Unbeknownst to the PCs, the void energy that once suffused the crypts still lingers in Dame Talia's sepulchre and is the source of both Talia's and Constan's rapid transformation. If any of the PCs contracted zombie rot in the battle, they might be worried about becoming a zombie themselves. While this is certainly a concern in the long term, unless the PC lingers in Dame Talia's sepulchre, the disease progresses no more quickly than normal.

Treasure and Development: Both Dame Talia and Constan Russi wear explorer's clothing and a silver religious symbol of Iomedae. Dame Talia also wears her breastplate, and her longsword and shield still lie within her open casket. Constan carries his copy of the *Acts of Iomedae*, as well as a silver key inlaid with red amethyst. Constan's second immediately recognizes this key, as they carry a similar one themselves. The key opens the chest hidden in Constan's quarters. None of the survivors begrudge the PCs if they take any of these items for themselves, especially once the group abandons the crypts later in the adventure.

Reward: Award each character 10 XP if at least one of them takes charge of the situation and clears out the panicked crowd during the battle with the zombies.

PRIESTLY AFFAIRS

The character Constan Russi selected as his second likely remembers what Constan made them promise years ago and will want to search for the lock matching the twin keys now in the party's possession. But first, the PCs might choose to console their fellow survivors. With Constan's death, dread spreads quickly among the survivors, as all of them have come to rely on Constan's magical supply of food and water for survival. While the next two events can be played in either order, they're presented assuming the party investigates Constan's quarters first, so that the PCs can have the *Lung Bloodstone of Arazni* in their possession before asserting themselves as the new leaders of the survivors.

Event 6: The Priest's Quarters

An ossuary at the far end of the crypts contains the personal effects of Constan Russi, including a cot and bedroll, a change of clothes, and a plain-looking chest.

Searching the Chamber: The plain-looking chest isn't locked and doesn't match the PCs' keys; the few keepsakes it contains were of personal significance to Constan but are of no value to the characters. If the PCs search the chamber for 10 minutes, they discover a second chest hidden in a niche behind a stack of bones. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check finds the chest in 1 minute instead. Unlike the other chest, this one is finely crafted of redwood and bound with silver.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



Constan Russi, my Dear Second,

It is my truest regret that I burden you with this duty. However, none in Yua's Hope are as devoted to the cause as you, and thus this task is yours and yours alone. Centuries ago, the body of our beloved mistress was stolen from its sepulchre. I am speaking, of course, of blessed Arazni, herald of Aroden and predecessor of the Inheritor. Before ushering Arazni into eternal damnation, Geb forged four foul artifacts, the Bloodstones of Arazni, within which he sealed Arazni's organs. Before you lies one such artifact, the Lung Bloodstone of Arazni. The Bloodstones must be kept safe at all costs, for their possession allows one to control the former herald as one forces a puppet to dance. We cannot allow this fate to befall her. Protect this relic, and when the time is right, deliver it to the highest authority within the Knights of Ozem. If Geb or Tar-Baphon were to reunite the Bloodstones, I shudder to think what atrocities they might inflict upon Golarion. Keep the secret safe and name a second so the mantle of Crimson Keeper might live on should you perish.

Truest Sincerities,
Sir Nalleth Clearwater

Handout #1

Using either of the keys to unlock the chest reveals its contents: a letter and a canopic jar, its lid carved to resemble the skull of a strange monster.

When the PCs examine the letter, provide the players with **Handout #1**. The canopic jar sends a shiver down the spine of anyone who touches it. The jar is the *Lung Bloodstone*, one of the four legendary *Bloodstones of Arazni*. More details about this item can be found on page 109.

Treasure: The redwood chest is finely made and fitted with an average lock. The chest alone is worth 20 gp, or 30 gp if the keys are included. Individually, the chest's keys are worth 2 gp each.

Reward: Award each PC 30 XP for discovering the *Lung Bloodstone of Arazni*.

Event 7: Keeping the Peace

A sizable antechamber at the base of the steps leading out of the crypts has served as a communal meeting space for the survivors for the past six years. Though filled with crumbling placards and the busts of forgotten crusaders, the space is relatively clean, despite its disrepair. Normally filled with people seeking solace in each other's company, the air now rings with voices like clashing blades as the survivors argue about what to do next.

The loudest of the voices is currently that of Hurdauw Pulsoma, who, with Constan Russi's death, now realizes she has forever lost her chance to admit her love for the man. After several minutes during which the other survivors attempt to console her, Crasian loses patience with the sobbing woman. "We have bigger problems now," the halfling snaps. "Namely, what are we going to eat?" The outburst causes the other survivors to begin shouting even louder, and for a moment it seems the situation will escalate to violence. This section uses the influence social encounter rules (*Pathfinder GM Core* 187) to reflect the PCs' attempt to reestablish peace and cement their role as leaders of the group.

The PCs must prove they're worthy of leading the survivors in the wake of Dame Talia and Constan Russi's deaths. Every round, each PC can attempt to Influence one NPC or Discover something about them. (The PCs likely already know most of the information they're Discovering, but the activity represents the PCs thinking on their feet and applying that knowledge amid the growing panic.) The PCs have 10 minutes (1 minute per round) before the other survivors decide whether to place their faith in the PCs. During the encounter, any NPCs the PCs successfully influence become cooperative, which represents that NPC tentatively trusting the PCs' leadership. If the PCs

continue to positively influence a cooperative NPC, they might earn that NPC's survivor boon. While failing to influence anyone doesn't prevent the PCs from progressing in the story, survivor boons can help them later in the adventure if they choose to travel with the other survivors (see Surviving in the Gravelands on page 22).

ALYZO SHARDHELM

LEVEL 1

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Vain male human singer and songwriter

Perception +6

Will +5

Discovery DC 14 Perception, DC 13 Performance, DC 14 Society

Influence Skills DC 17 Diplomacy (to convince Alyzo that action is necessary), DC 15 Intimidation (threatening Alyzo into action), DC 13 Performance (to point out that the survivors, like a quartet, need each other to produce the best results)

Influence 2 Alyzo attends to the PCs as they plan, becoming cooperative.

Influence 4 Alyzo suggests getting the rest of the Querulous Quartet onboard. If all four members become cooperative, the party earns their survivor boon on the journey to Vellumis.

Resistances Alyzo doesn't care about dying so long as he's remembered. He feels a tragic death is better than an unremarkable one. Reminding Alyzo of his mortality increases the check's DC by 2.

Weaknesses Alyzo cares about his image more than anything else. Pointing out that his actions might influence how others remember him reduce the check's DC by 2.

Background Alyzo was a head-in-the-clouds son of a lesser Chelaxian noble and left home to make a name for himself in Lastwall. Being utterly useless with a sword, he became a performer, founding the Querulous Quartet with Crasian, Bicky, and Kleb.

Appearance Alyzo's sharp features and inky black hair befit a proper son of Cheliox. He wears outlandishly colored outfits, though most are threadbare after six years in the crypts.

Personality Flighty, fanciful, vain

Penalty Alyzo left home because he couldn't be bothered with Cheliox's rules. PCs who invoke the rule of law or similar plays to authority take a -2 circumstance penalty to further checks to influence him.

BICKY AND KLEB

LEVEL 1

UNIQUE SMALL GOBLIN ANIMAL

Impulsive and mischievous female goblin musician sisters

Perception +5

Will +4

Discovery DC 13 Perception, DC 17 Performance, DC 15 Society

Influence Skills DC 13 Crafting (demonstrating how things work better when they're together), DC 15 Performance (to point out that the survivors, like a quartet, need each other to produce the best results), DC 15 Religion (scaring the goblins into compliance with tales of the undead)

Influence 1 Bicky and Kleb hang on the PCs' every word, becoming cooperative.

Influence 3 Bicky and Kleb suggest getting the rest of the Querulous Quartet onboard. If all four members become cooperative, the party earns their survivor boon on the journey to Vellumis.

Resistances Bicky and Kleb innocently believe they can best any undead they encounter, like the heroes in their songs do. Attempts to warn Bicky and Kleb of the dangers of Tar-Baphon's forces increase the check's DC by 2.

Weaknesses Bicky and Kleb long for the pungent goblin cuisine of their younger days. Pointing out the variety of food available outside the crypts decreases the check's

DC by 2.

Background Siblings from a tight-knit goblin community, Bicky and Kleb were encouraged to leave home and seek a place that appreciated their unique brand of music. They found Alyzo and Crasian and started the Querulous Quartet with them.

Appearance Bicky and Kleb are emerald-skinned goblins with bulbous heads and long ears that terminate in sharp points. Both have bright red eyes, but Kleb wears a halfling-sized wig, and Bicky prefers to dress in anything with straps, spikes, or studs.

Personality Bicky is excitable, hyperactive, and impulsive. Kleb is precise, mischievous, and creative.

Penalty Bicky and Kleb are used to people underestimating them, but they can't follow someone who does. PCs who belittle the goblins take a -2 circumstance penalty to further checks to influence them.

CRASIAN PATTERTAP

LEVEL 1

UNIQUE SMALL HALFLING HUMANOID

Uncaring male halfling vocalist

Perception +8

Will +5

Discovery DC 15 Perception, DC 15 Performance, DC 13 Society

Influence Skills DC 13 Gambling Lore (to remind him that every choice is a gamble), DC 17 Performance (to point out that the survivors, like a quartet, need each other to produce the best results), DC 13 Society (to suggest that Crasian's prior crimes might be forgiven if he helps rescue the other survivors)

Influence 2 Crasian promises to curb future outbursts, becoming cooperative.

Influence 4 Crasian suggests getting the rest of the Querulous Quartet onboard. If all four members become cooperative,



Alyzo Shardhelm

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

the party earns the Quartet's survivor boon on the journey to Vellumis.

Resistances Crasian is equal parts craven and cautious. Attempting to downplay the danger the survivors face increases the check's DC by 2.

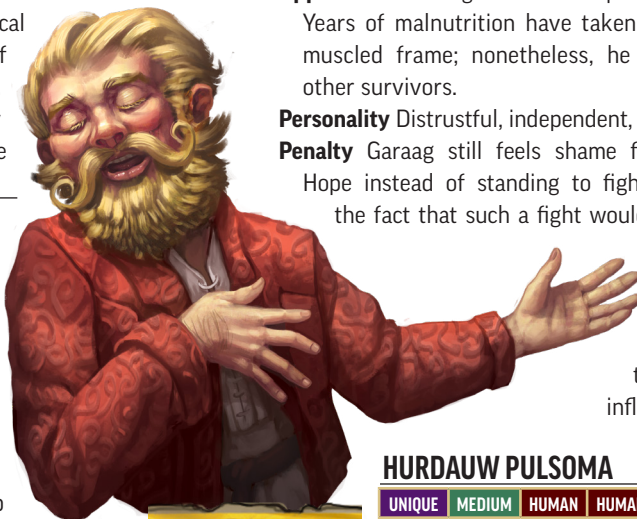
Weaknesses Crasian has been vocal about his desire for even a sip of wine since entering the crypts. Promising Crasian a share of any wine the survivors find reduces the check's DC by 2.

Background A former cutpurse, Crasian spent his adolescence in the River Kingdoms, stealing anything not nailed down. After robbing from a particularly vindictive Razmiri merchant, he hopped a boat to Lastwall and "settled down" with the Querulous Quartet.

Appearance Crasian has sharp features, piercing azure eyes, and curly hair the color of wheat. His clothing is surprisingly well kept, and he often has a knowing, practiced smile.

Personality Insensitive, greedy, cowardly

Penalty Crasian refuses to follow anyone he thinks might turn him in. PCs who suggest Crasian must pay for his past crimes take a -2 circumstance penalty to further checks to influence him.



Crasian Pattertap

GARAAG SUNBRAND

LEVEL 1

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

Standoffish male orc laborer

Perception +5

Will +1

Discovery DC 15 Diplomacy, DC 13 Orc Lore, DC 15 Perception

Influence Skills DC 15 Diplomacy (to convince Garaag the survivors need his strength to survive), DC 17 Intimidation (accusing Garaag of cowardice for abandoning the survivors), DC 13 Orc Lore (reminding him that members of a warband must fight together)

Influence 1 Garaag takes his place among the other survivors, becoming cooperative.

Influence 4 When food is scarce, Garaag is the first to volunteer to go without. If he agrees to accompany the survivors on their journey to Vellumis, the PCs earn Garaag's survivor boon.

Resistances Garaag is proud of his heritage and still considers Belkzen his home. Suggesting that Garaag must leave his past behind increases the check's DC by 2.

Weaknesses Despite his time living with the other survivors, Garaag distrusts people of other ancestries. Dromaars and orcs who attempt to influence him reduce the check's DC by 4.

Background Garaag fled before the Whispering Tyrant's

forces, taking refuge in Yua's Hope mere hours before the survivors entered the crypts. Though well meaning, Garaag has struggled to find common ground with the other survivors.

Appearance Garaag is a tall and proud warrior of Belkzen. Years of malnutrition have taken their toll on Garaag's muscled frame; nonetheless, he still towers over the other survivors.

Personality Distrustful, independent, proud

Penalty Garaag still feels shame for retreating to Yua's Hope instead of standing to fight the undead, despite the fact that such a fight would have surely ended in his death. PCs who question Garaag's bravery take a -2 circumstance penalty to further checks to influence him.

HURDAUW PULSOMA

LEVEL 1

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Anxious female human chef

Perception +6

Will +3

Discovery DC 15 Diplomacy, DC 15 Perception, DC 13 Society

Influence Skills DC 13 Cooking Lore (framing the survivors as ingredients in a stew), DC 15 Diplomacy (consoling Hurdauw and validating her emotions), DC 17 Intimidation (yelling at her to pull herself together for the children's sake)

Influence 1 Hurdauw composes herself as best she can, becoming cooperative.

Influence 4 Hurdauw volunteers to cook any food the survivors gather. If she accompanies the PCs to Vellumis, they earn Hurdauw's survivor boon.

Resistances Hurdauw has had six years to focus on her misery. Attempts to convince her that things aren't so bad increase the check's DC by 2.

Weaknesses Hurdauw has practiced breathing techniques to keep herself calm. Leading her in such techniques reduces the check's DC by 4.

Background Hurdauw's ex-husband, Hesanoto, planned on skipping town with a Brevic noble's son the night Tar-Baphon invaded. As a result, Hurdauw has spent the past six years struggling to raise their son, Jystolo, by herself, all the while grappling with anxiety.

Appearance Hurdauw is full-figured with rosy skin and raven-colored hair. Worry paints her face when she's having an anxiety attack or when she thinks no one's looking.

Personality Hurdauw is kind-hearted but anxious and pessimistic. Her young son Jystolo is innocent, inquisitive, and empathetic.

Penalty Nothing upsets Hurdauw more than when people downplay her concerns. PCs who frame Hurdauw's worries as frivolous take a -2 circumstance penalty to further checks to influence her.

JONO AND YILUVA BRUSHPAW

LEVEL 1

UNIQUE TINY KITSUNE HUMANOID

Aloof male and fierce nonbinary kitsune ranger spouses

Perception +12

Will +7

Discovery DC 17 Perception, DC 17 Society, DC 13 Survival

Influence Skills DC 17 Diplomacy (to convince the Brushpaws that sticking together would be best for their children), DC 13 Survival or Hunting Lore (to point out that herds have a better chance at survival than lone animals)

Influence 3 Jono and Yiluva are convinced of the PCs' competency, becoming cooperative.

Influence 6 Jono and Yiluva volunteer to forage for the other survivors. If they accompany the party to Vellumis, the PCs earn the Brushpaws' survivor boon.

Resistances Before taking refuge in the crypts, Jono and Yiluva spent years ranging Lastwall and are already aware of the dangers that lurk in the wilds. Attempts to convince them that it's too dangerous for them to venture alone into the wilderness increase the check's DC by 4.

Weaknesses Even in their fox forms, the Brushpaws haven't eaten properly, severely limiting their capabilities. Pointing this out reduces the check's DC by 2.

Background Jono and Yiluva ranged the forests of Lastwall their whole lives, trading information to the Knights of Ozem for supplies. When they brought word that the Whispering Tyrant's armies were approaching Yua's Hope, the Brushpaws and their children were offered sanctuary, but after six years in the crypts, they wonder if they would have been better off in the wild.

Appearance Jono appears as a silver fox with a white-tipped tail and green eyes, while Yiluva is brownish red with a black-tipped tail and yellow eyes. Their kits Retsnav and Retsnov have a mix of their parents' fur colors but share their father's eyes.

Personality Jono is aloof and stubborn. Yiluva is elegant, fierce, and determined. Retsnav is caring but shy. Retsnov is eager and playful.

Penalty The Brushpaws have sacrificed their freedom for the other survivors. PCs who imply the Brushpaws haven't done their fair share take a -2 circumstance penalty to further checks to influence them.

MARKO BLIGHTENDER

LEVEL 0

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Brooding male human teenager

Perception +2

Will +1

Discovery DC 12 Perception, DC 12 Society

Influence Skills DC 14 Diplomacy (leveling with Marko and explaining things to him like an adult), DC 12 Games Lore (relating the current predicament to one of Marko's favorite games), DC 19 Intimidation (to demand Marko behave)

Influence 3 Marko reluctantly follows the party's directions, becoming cooperative.

Influence 4 Marko's youthful exuberance energizes the

other survivors. If Marko travels to Vellumis with the party, the PCs earn his survivor boon.

Resistances Marko believes he doesn't need to listen to anyone if he doesn't want to. Attempts to present oneself as an authority over Marko increase the check's DC by 4.

Weaknesses Deep down, Marko is still a child. Making Marko feel loved and secure reduces the check's DC by 2, or by 4 if he's offered a hug.

Background Marko's mothers, Amelia and Genivare Blightender, were away in the field when he took shelter in the crypts. Marko hasn't seen his mothers for years and feels alone despite the adults' attempts to console him.

Appearance Marko is a beanpole human boy with wavy mauve hair and sunken features from a childhood spent eating gruel. He wears ill-fitting, patchwork clothing stitched from scraps.

Personality Belligerent, independent, stubborn

Penalty Marko hasn't seen his mothers in years and is starting to forget their faces. PCs that suggest Marko recall his memories of them take a -2 circumstance penalty to further checks to influence him.

ROKVEL HARBROW

LEVEL 1

UNIQUE MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Contemplative female dwarf blacksmith

Perception +6

Will +8

Discovery DC 15 Lastwall Lore, DC 15 Perception, DC 15 Society

Influence Skills DC 13 Crafting (comparing the survivors to iron worked into steel for strength), DC 15 Diplomacy (to suggest she call upon her fond memories of Dame Talia), DC 13 Iomedae Lore (comparing the survivors' situation to one of Constan's parables from the *Acts of Iomedae*)

Influence 1 Rokvel supports the PCs' bid for leadership, becoming cooperative.

Influence 4 Rokvel offers to repair any equipment the group needs for their journey. If she accompanies the party to Vellumis, the PCs earn Rokvel's survivor boon.

Resistances Rokvel is a no-nonsense woman who tries to keep a level head. Appeals to her emotion increase the check's DC by 2.

Weaknesses Secretly, Rokvel has a soft spot for children. PCs who were youths upon entering the crypts have their check DCs to influence Rokvel reduced by 2.

Background Rokvel was Yua's Hope's resident blacksmith, having left the Five Kings Mountains as a young adult and settling in Lastwall. She realized she was a woman a few years ago and sees her previous life as though she were a jewel, calling her pre-transition life her "uncut" self.

Appearance Rokvel is a powerfully built dwarf woman with chestnut hair. Her hands are still covered in callouses, even after six years separated from her forge.

Personality Stern, logical, determined

Penalty If the PCs chastise Rokvel or suggest that she's emotionally cold, they take a -2 circumstance penalty to further checks to influence her.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



Reward: Award the PCs 10 XP for each NPC who becomes cooperative during the encounter. For the purposes of awarding XP, groups of NPCs (such as the Brushpaws or Bicky and Kleb) count as one NPC.

Development: At the end of the encounter, the PCs should discuss with the rest of the survivors what to do now that Constan and Dame Talia are dead. Everyone believes the crypts must be abandoned and that their best chance for survival is to head to the nearest known settlement, the city of Vellumis, which lies over 60 miles away. However, many survivors have differing opinions about how the journey should be made. Some (notably Garaag and the Brushpaws) believe their best chance is to separate, while others see the wisdom of traveling in a group. If the PCs earned an NPC's cooperation, that survivor goes along with the party's suggestions, whether the PCs push for the survivors to stick together or split into groups. If the PCs didn't earn a survivor's cooperation, that survivor decides to part ways with the other survivors and make a go of it alone. Both outcomes have consequences during the rest of the adventure.

Rescuing Ourselves

It doesn't take long for the PCs and the other survivors to pack their things and assemble at the entrance to the crypts. Barred from the inside with a heavy wooden beam, the door to the crypts has served as a symbol of security for the survivors, a bulwark against the undead threats that lie beyond. It opens into the basement of the All-Spiral Cathedral, a temple to Pharasma erected over the crypts of Mordesha when Yua's Hope was founded. Apart from a few risky forays to the surface to gather much-needed supplies, the door is rarely opened. For many of the survivors, this is the first time they've left the crypts in six years.

SURVIVING IN THE GRAVELANDS

Without a magical source of food and water, the PCs must forage to sustain themselves on the journey to Vellumis. If the PCs convince other survivors to travel with them, those NPCs also require food and water but might grant the party a survivor boon. However the PCs proceed, they're going to need to make some tough decisions on their journey to Vellumis.

Food and Water

The PCs begin the journey to Vellumis with no food or water and must forage to survive. Throughout most of the journey, the Survival DC to Subsist is 17. Keep in mind that if the PCs travel with other survivors, they have additional mouths to feed beyond their own. While it's unlikely anyone will die from a lack of food or water on the way to Vellumis, an NPC forced to go without might doubt their decision to follow the PCs or even abandon the party altogether. Similarly, a PC who lacks

sufficient food and water might suffer the early effects of starvation (*Pathfinder GM Core* 43) before reaching their destination.

Morale

Many encounters in the Gravelands will weaken the resolve of the PCs' fellow survivors. It's up to the PCs to ensure everyone works together to survive the journey to Vellumis. Particularly loyal NPCs might even grant the party a survivor boon, a unique reward that helps the PCs survive the Gravelands!

Based on the results of the Keeping the Peace encounter, NPCs who travel with the PCs begin their adventure in the Gravelands as either cooperative or loyal. A cooperative NPC accompanies the PCs to Vellumis but has their doubts about the PCs' ability to lead. Loyal NPCs place their full faith in the PCs and grant them a survivor boon. A loyal NPC repeatedly forced to go without food, who is put in danger, or who is otherwise mistreated might become merely cooperative and withdraw their survivor boon. Similarly, a cooperative NPC who is mistreated might decide to abandon the group and strike out on their own. The PCs should work to ensure that as many NPCs as possible remain loyal, as doing so greatly increases the odds that everyone makes it to Vellumis alive.

Survivor Boons

Fox Forage (Brushpaws): The Brushpaws hunt and forage to help feed the rest of the group. Each PC gains the benefits of the Forager skill feat even if they aren't trained in Survival. In addition, PCs with the Brushpaws' survivor boon don't take the usual -5 penalty if they spend less than 8 hours using Survival to Subsist.

Hunger Crusher (Garaag): The orcs of Belkzen take pride in their ability to go without when resources are scarce. If Garaag accompanies the PCs to Vellumis, he can fast for the entire journey, if necessary, and a lack of food alone isn't enough to convince him to abandon the group.

A Chef's Touch (Hurdauw): Hurdauw takes charge of cooking for the group, ensuring all meals are nourishing and filling. Provided they've eaten one of Hurdauw's meals in the last 24 hours, the survivors can roll Fortitude saving throws against disease twice and use the best result. This is a fortune effect.

Marching Song (Querulous Quartet): When Hustling, the survivors use the highest Constitution modifier among the PCs to determine how long they can Hustle, instead of the lowest Constitution modifier. To receive this boon, all four members of the Querulous Quartet must accompany the group, and all must be loyal.

Youthful Endurance (Marko): Marko's willingness to press on is infectious. The PCs can use exploration activities even while fatigued, although they take a -1

circumstance penalty to skill checks they attempt while performing those activities.

Cobble Together (Rokvel): Rokvel keeps the PCs equipped to lead the march to Vellumis. Twice per day, Rokvel can cobble together a common level 0 or 1st-level item that doesn't have the magical trait. Items Rokvel cobbles together have the shoddy trait. Cobbling something together takes Rokvel a number of hours equal to the days she would need to Craft that item.

YUA'S HOPE

It shouldn't take long for the PCs to realize that their worst fears are confirmed—Yua's Hope remains abandoned. While it's unlikely any of the survivors know that Lastwall is dead and the Gravelands have risen in its place, everyone can sense that something is off about the land. The environment is devoid of life; no birds chirp, the ground is dry and cracked, and the few leafless trees that remain stand eerily still, as if untouched by the breeze. The forlorn scene unsettles the other survivors, and anyone who isn't at least cooperative with the PCs quickly splits off from the rest of the group.

Scavenging Yua's Hope

The town of Yua's Hope is a corpse of the prosperous settlement it once was, left to rot over many years. While any food left behind during Tar-Baphon's invasion spoiled long ago, the PCs might want to scavenge the town for other supplies. (If the PCs don't think to explore Yua's Hope themselves, one of their fellow survivors suggests doing so.) As the PCs are likely familiar with the general layout of Yua's Hope—either from their time before entering the crypts or from the survivors' few forays aboveground over these long years—feel free to share the map of the town with the players as their characters explore.

The PCs should also be aware that undead still occupy Yua's Hope. (Again, if the PCs seem to have forgotten this fact, one of the NPCs reminds them.) As the survivors explore the town, the PCs must weigh their need to gather supplies against the dangers of drawing attention from the undead that still plague Yua's Hope. Be clear to the players that a risky encounter before the characters begin their journey to Vellumis might drain their resources, and that finding a safe place to recover isn't guaranteed. The repercussions of seemingly small decisions the players make now will compound throughout the course of the adventure, until the survivors reach the safety of Vellumis.

This section uses a variant of the Victory Point rules (*Pathfinder GM Core* 184) to reflect the characters' ability to explore Yua's Hope while avoiding the undead that roam the town. When they first venture forth from the crypts, the PCs have 10 Evasion Points (EP). Rather than accumulating EP, the characters must try to avoid

EVADE THE UNDEAD

EXPLORATION | MOVE

While exploring the ruins of Yua's Hope, you move from one location to another while evading the undead that roam the town. Attempt a DC 10 Stealth check to Sneak past the undead or a DC 13 Acrobatics or Athletics check to move so quickly that the undead lose track of your position. Alternatively, you can attempt a DC 15 Society check to Recall Knowledge and plot the most efficient route to your destination.

Critical Success You gain 1 EP.

Success You don't gain or lose EP.

Failure You lose 1 EP.

Critical Failure You lose 2 EP.

11+ EP The PCs remain out of sight. While the group's EP total remains at this level, PCs gain a +1 circumstance bonus to checks made to Evade the Undead.

10-6 EP The PCs spot a lone zombie or skeleton shambling about, but they can avoid it by keeping quiet and staying on the move. If the PCs decide to engage the creature, they gain a +2 circumstance bonus to initiative.

5-3 EP The party spots a group of four zombie shamblers (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 356). Unless the PCs keep moving, the zombies eventually catch up to them and attack.

2-1 EP Six zombie shamblers (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 356) attack the PCs. The zombies descend on the party in groups of two, each pair from a different direction, cutting off obvious escape routes.

0 EP A shambler troop (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 302) corners the survivors in an alleyway or surrounds a building as the PCs search it. The troop gains a +2 circumstance bonus to initiative. If the PCs survive the attack, reset the group's EP to 5, but any subsequent failure to Evade the Undead is treated as a critical failure until the PCs regain at least 1 EP.

losing them. As the PCs explore Yua's Hope, they risk losing EP each time they move from one location to another, triggering progressively more dangerous encounters with the undead at various EP thresholds. The PCs can also lose EP automatically by lingering in one place too long or acting recklessly as they explore.

The PCs can avoid losing EP by taking the Evade the Undead activity. Not every character needs to take this activity, but those who do take a circumstance penalty to their check equal to the number of characters in the group (either PCs or NPCs) who don't participate, to a maximum circumstance penalty of -4. (Being expert scouts, the Brushpaws don't count toward this penalty, assuming the kitsune accompany the group.) If no characters take the activity, the group automatically

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



YUA'S HOPE
1 SQUARE = 10 FEET

loses 2 EP. Each time a loss of EP causes the survivors to reach an Evasion Threshold, the survivors encounter a group of undead.

As the group explores Yua's Hope, and later as they make the journey to Vellumis, any NPCs who accompany the PCs allow the characters to take the lead. They remain out of combat and generally defer to the PCs when difficult decisions need to be made. If you find that you need game statistics for a certain NPC, treat that individual as a commoner (*Pathfinder NPC Core* 66).

A1. All-Spiral Cathedral

Moderate 1

The dark stones of this gothic cathedral are shaped to resemble tombstones. Each is carved with a short blessing to one of the deities revered by the Knights of Ozem, though most are prayers to Pharasma for protection against the forces of evil and undeath.

Although the church of Pharasma donated the stone for this cathedral during Yua's Hope's construction, the structure was used as a multi-faith center of worship, housing shrines to Iomedae, Erastil, Sarenrae, and a dozen other deities worshipped across Avistan. Now, the altars are smashed and the religious icons defaced with profanities.

Creatures: Just outside the cathedral lie the remains of a priest and a handful of his followers, all of whom died defending the cathedral from the undead. While the bones themselves are harmless, the priest's remains have been inhabited by a corpselight. If the PCs investigate the remains, the corpselight animates its host and attacks.

The street outside the cathedral is mostly featureless. You can use either the Yua's Hope map above for this encounter or sketch out the area using a blank battle mat.

CORPSELIGHT

CREATURE 2

RARE **MEDIUM** **UNDEAD**

Pathfinder Abomination Vaults 232

Perception +7; corpse sense (precise) 30 feet, darkvision

Languages Common, Necril

Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +8, Stealth +8

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2

Corpse Sense A corpselight can sense dead bodies within range. This is a precise sense that functions through solid barriers less than 5 feet thick.

AC 17; **Fort** +5, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

HP 40, void healing (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360);

Immunities bleed, death effects, disease, fear, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Weaknesses** bludgeoning 5 (in skeletal corpses) or slashing 5 (in fleshy corpses)



Sunlight Powerlessness While in sunlight, a corpselight is stunned 2 and clumsy 2, and it can't Claim a Corpse.

Wisp Form When a corpselight is reduced to 0 Hit Points while merged with a corpse, it is instead reduced to 1 Hit Point as the corpse collapses to the ground and the corpselight emerges in its wisp form. While in wisp form, a corpselight is Tiny and can take no actions other than Claim Corpse or Fly. A corpselight that starts its turn in wisp form must attempt a DC 16 flat check at the end of its turn; if it fails, it loses 1 Hit Point. A corpselight reduced to 0 Hit Points while in wisp form is destroyed.

Speed 25 feet, fly 25 feet (wisp form only)

Melee ✦ jaws +10, **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing

Melee ✦ claw +10 (agile), **Damage** 1d6+6 slashing

Claim Corpse ✦ **Requirements** The corpselight is in wisp form and is adjacent to a Medium or Small corpse that hasn't been claimed by a corpselight in the past 24 hours; **Effect** The corpselight merges with the corpse, causes the corpse to Stand, and regains 3d6 Hit Points.

Death Light ✦✦✦ (emotion, fear, mental, occult) **Requirements** The corpselight is in a corpse; **Effect** The corpselight emits a sickly blue beam of light from its mouth and eyes in a 20-foot cone. All living creatures in this area must attempt a DC 18 Fortitude saving throw. If at least one creature fails its save, the corpselight regains 2d6 Hit Points, gaining any that exceed its maximum as temporary Hit Points that last for 1 minute. The corpselight can't use Death Light again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 1d6 void damage.

Failure The creature takes 2d6 void damage and is frightened 1.

Critical Failure The creature takes 4d6 void damage and is frightened 3.

Treasure: A PC who Searches the remains of the priest and his followers discovers a +1 mace, a crying angel pendant, and a vial of holy water amongst the bones.

A2. Cast-Iron Creations

This building stands defiant against the ravages of time, although the structure has certainly seen better days. A creeping lichen covers most of the building, forming strange patterns that resemble scowling skulls across the brick.

Once her pride and joy, Rokvel Hardbrow's orderly blacksmithing shop is now in ruins.

Treasure: Scattered throughout the ruined shop are two sets of blacksmithing artisan's toolkits, a grappling hook, a warhammer, a steel shield, and an incomplete suit of full plate that functions as half plate sized for a Medium creature. Finding each item requires a separate DC 13 Perception check to Search. If Rokvel accompanies the PCs, they gain a +1 circumstance bonus to checks to find the items. If



Rokvel chose to abandon the survivors, she's already scavenged the shop, only leaving behind a single set of blacksmithing toolkits.

A3. Flatpine's General Goods Moderate 1

The sign dangling above the entrance to this building reads "Flatpine's General Goods." A lone pine tree is painted beneath the faded words. Beyond the shop's entrance, wooden shelves and countertops have rotted and collapsed, leaving only stone behind.

Flatpine's General Goods was once the center of commerce in Yua's Hope, as local merchants and crafters peddled their wares here.

Creatures: Once beloved members of the community, shopkeepers Blidora Flatpine and her wife Escalamies were known for giving treats to children while listening to their problems. During the invasion of Yua's Hope, the two hid in their store's cellar until a band of ghouls discovered them. Now cursed with ghoulish hunger, Blidora and Escalamies lament never having tasted the flesh of the community they once served. They aim to make amends by devouring the PCs, beginning with those who were children they knew in life. Any PC who grew up in Yua's Hope or otherwise knew Blidora and Escalamies as a child must attempt a DC 15 Will save when they encounter the Flatpines. On a failure, the PC is frightened 1 (or frightened 2 on a critical failure) as the encounter begins.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



GHOUL STALKERS (2)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Monster Core 163

Initiative Perception +7

Treasure: Once the PCs defeat the ghouls, they can attempt a DC 13 Perception check to Search the shop. On a success, they discover a cache of two minor elixirs of life and four lesser alchemist's fires.

A4. Hope's Breath Inn

Severe 1

Once a cheery place filled with laughter and music, this inn's hearth fires have long since darkened. The building's second story has collapsed almost entirely, blanketing the ground with shingles and exposing its interior to the elements.

In its heyday, Hope's Breath Inn bustled with travelers and crusaders alike. Now its halls are empty of song and merriment, replaced with the hollow silence of death. If Hurdauw Pulsoma accompanies the group, she easily recognizes the building, as she served as the head chef here before Tar-Baphon's forces invaded.

Creatures: Like the crypts of Mordesha, Hope's Breath Inn once featured a basement that the Knights of Ozem outfitted with emergency supplies. Tar-Baphon's undead

quickly discovered this hiding place, however, and no one who took shelter there survived. When the PCs arrive, a group of zombies sense the presence of the living and shamle forth to claim their first taste of living flesh in over half a decade. If Hurdauw travels with the PCs, she immediately recognizes two of the zombies as her husband Hesamoto and the man he planned to run away with. Hurdauw lets out a frantic cry at the sight, granting the undead a +2 circumstance bonus to their initiative.

ZOMBIE SHAMBLERS (6)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Monster Core 356

Initiative Perception +0

Treasure: Most of the supplies in the basement are ruined, but if the PCs defeat the zombies, they can salvage 10 bedrolls, two lesser antiplagues, two minor elixirs of life, and a healer's toolkit.

A5. Mordesha House Lodge

An unusual symbol is cobbled into the limestone face of this fanciful building, which stands tall amid the neighboring ruins. Judging from the broken furniture inside the structure, the building seems to have been designed to house a multitude of guests.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Society check to Recall Knowledge recognizes the Pathfinder Society's famous Glyph of the Open Road incorporated into the building's front face. Though the building once served as a local lodge for the Society, any Pathfinders stationed here either fled or fell before the undead forces that claimed Yua's Hope.

Treasure: If the PCs search the building, they discover an abandoned steel box in one of the lodge's back rooms. The box has no obvious locking mechanism, but a character trained in Thievery can open it by succeeding at a DC 20 Thievery check to manipulate a secret latch. The box contains 13 cp, 54 sp, and 36 gp in loose coins, as well as a *wayfinder* abandoned by its former owner when they fled Yua's Hope.

Reward: Award each PC 10 XP for discovering the abandoned *wayfinder*.

A6. The Open Pot

Low 1

The roof of this building has caved in, leaving its crumbling walls to form a shape not unlike that of a massive cauldron. Lying amidst the rubble is a sign that reads "The Open Pot."

Yua's Hope didn't have many restaurants, but the Open Pot was by far the most popular. Unfortunately, nearly everything inside the once-bustling eatery is in ruins, giving the building an empty, forlorn feeling.

Creatures: When Tar-Baphon's undead overran Yua's Hope, everything from rats to ravens were raised

into the Whispering Tyrant's service. Upon becoming undead, the rats in the Open Pot fed for weeks upon the flesh of slaughtered townsfolk before finally consuming each other. Now only their skeletons remain. When the PCs enter the Open Pot, the skeletal rats scurry from behind an overturned table and attack.

SKELETAL RAT SWARM

CREATURE 2

UNCOMMON LARGE MINDLESS SKELETON SWARM UNDEAD UNHOLY

Perception +8; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +7, Stealth +8

Str +4, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** -5, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2

AC 16; **Fort** +5, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

HP 40, void healing (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360);

Immunities bleed, death effects, disease, grabbed, mental, paralyzed, poison, precision, prone, restrained, swarm mind (*Monster Core* 360), unconscious; **Weaknesses** area damage 4, splash damage 4; **Resistances** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5, piercing 5, slashing 5

Speed 30 feet, climb 10 feet

Ravenous Sickness (disease, unholy) An infected creature can't heal damage it takes from this disease until the disease is cured; **Saving Throw** DC 20 Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effect (1 day); **Stage 2** 1d6 void damage and the target requires twice as much food for a creature of their size to avoid starvation (1 day); **Stage 3** 1d6 void damage and the target requires three times as much food for a creature of their size to avoid starvation (1 day); **Stage 4** 1d6 void damage and the target takes 1 void damage each hour until it eats a full meal (1 day); **Stage 5** dead, rising as a skeleton immediately after it devours the flesh off its own bones.

Swarming Bites ♦ Each enemy in the swarm's space takes 3d4 piercing damage (DC 18 basic Fortitude save). A creature that fails this save is exposed to ravenous sickness.

Treasure: A PC who succeeds at a DC 13 Perception check to Search the restaurant's common room discovers a finely wrought pewter tankard. Once cleaned of grime, the tankard is worth 2 gp.

A spacious office occupies the southern end of the restaurant. The office has been stripped of furnishings, save for a heavy oak desk against the east wall. If the PCs inspect the desk, they discover one of the drawers is secured with a simple lock. The key to the drawer is long gone, but the PCs can Pick the Lock with three successful DC 20 Thievery checks. Alternatively, they can Force Open the drawer with a DC 22 Athletics check. Buried among the loose papers that fill the drawer (notes about the restaurant's daily operations, now entirely irrelevant) is a *scroll of infuse vitality*.

A7. Residential District

Low 1

Most of the residential homes in Yua's Hope were built along the western side of town, a fact that makes the absolute



destruction of this district even more tragic. A handful of walls, none more than a few feet in height, remain standing today. The rest of the buildings are utterly demolished, their former existence fading as tendrils of sickly green vines reclaim the stones.

Dozens of homes made up this part of Yua's Hope, but even the older survivors struggle to remember who lived where. While a few small personal effects might be recovered from the destruction, it's clear the survivors' former lives in Yua's Hope are well and truly gone.

Hazard: Many people perished in the residential district when Tar-Baphon's forces swept over Yua's Hope, and while most of their souls have moved on, echoes of their torment scar the land. When the PCs enter this area, the unquiet spirits of former residents rise to taunt them, demanding to know why the survivors still live while they were eaten alive or torn apart by undead.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

HAUNTING ECHOES

UNCOMMON | COMPLEX | HAUNT

Stealth +10 (trained)

Description The spirits of community members linger on after their tragic deaths.

Disable DC 20 Diplomacy (untrained) to Request that the spirits leave or DC 18 Religion (trained) to exorcise the spirits

Manifest  (auditory, emotion, fear, mental) **Trigger** A creature the spirits knew in life enters the haunted area; **Effect** The spirits manifest with a terrible wailing. Each creature in the area must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or be frightened 1 (or frightened 2 on a critical failure). Frightened creatures are immobilized for as long as they remain frightened. The haunt then rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action; auditory, emotion, fear, mental) The haunt attempts an Intimidation check with a +11 modifier against the Will DC of each frightened creature as it bombards them with the voices of their dead loved ones.

Critical Success The creature takes 2d4 mental damage and its frightened condition increases by 1, to a maximum of frightened 3.

Success The creature takes 1d4 mental damage.

Failure The creature is unaffected.

Critical Failure The creature's frightened condition is reduced by 1.

Reset The haunt falls silent for 24 hours once all frightened creatures die or reduce their frightened condition's value to 0. During this time, a creature that isn't frightened can exorcise the spirits with a DC 18 Religion check, permanently destroying the haunt.

Treasure: Characters who lived in Yua's Hope prior to the undead invasion might want to visit their former homes. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check to Search the area finds an item of personal significance they thought was lost. Encourage the players to describe what their characters recover, but as a rule of thumb, each item should be 1st level or lower and worth no more than 5 gp.

A8. Town Hall

A crumbling, two-story structure stands at the end of the main road out of Yua's Hope. Enormous claw marks in the stone give the impression that a terrifying beast once stormed the place, but broken glass and a few scattered bones are all that remain to tell the tale.

This multi-chambered town hall was once the center for many development projects in the settlement. Today, the structure is as much a skeleton as anything in Yua's Hope.

HAZARD 2



Hurdaww Pulsoma

The building's clock tower, formerly a testament to the town's spirit of regrowth, was effortlessly swatted down by the Whispering Tyrant's forces.

Treasure: If the PCs pick through the ruins of the town hall, each of them can attempt a DC 17 Perception check to Search. On a success, the PCs discover a scroll case with a silver cap worth 2 gp beneath a mound of rubble. Protected from the elements inside the case is a map of the area surrounding Yua's Hope. Several major locations are marked on the map, including the city of Vellumis. The map grants the characters a +1 item bonus to Survival checks made to Sense Direction on their journey to Vellumis.

Reward: Award each PC 10 XP for discovering the map to Vellumis.

A9. Bright Barrel Brewery Severe 1

While the stone foundation of this building remains mostly intact, the second story is nothing but a skeleton of charred timbers. Judging from the kegs still stacked beside its front steps, the structure once served as a brewery.

The Bright Barrel Brewery was owned and operated by the Princastles, a well-to-do human family whose generous donations helped found Yua's Hope. Though the brewery has sat vacant for years, unlike so many of the town's inhabitants, the fate of the Princastles was not lost when the undead invaded Yua's Hope (see Treasure on page 29).

Hazard: Inside the brewery, a set of stone steps descend into the building's basement. However, the floorboards near the steps have all but rotted away. A creature who approaches the steps tumbles through the rotten wood, landing in the basement 10 feet below unless they successfully Grab an Edge (DC 10). A character can identify the weak floorboards with a successful DC 15 Crafting check or a DC 18 Perception check to Search. Once they spot the weak floorboards, the characters can approach the stairs from a different direction, easily avoiding the fall.

Creatures: Though the brewery is empty of undead, it isn't uninhabited. When Tar-Baphon's forces swept through town, the Princastles' last batch of ale was left unattended; in the intervening years, the ingredients spontaneously awakened into a yeast ooze. Whether the PCs enter the basement via the stairs or by falling through the floorboards, the ooze emerges from its vat as soon as it senses nearby movement. It withdraws into its vat if the PCs retreat up the steps. Otherwise, the ooze fights to the death.

ELITE YEAST OOZE

CREATURE 3

RARE LARGE MINDLESS OOZE

Variant yeast ooze (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #178: Punks in a Powderkeg* 88, *Pathfinder Monster Core* 6)

Perception +8; motion sense (precise) 60 feet, no vision

Skills Athletics +9

Str +3, **Dex** -2, **Con** +2, **Int** -5, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -5

Motion Sense A yeast ooze can sense nearby creatures through vibration and air or water movement.

AC 14; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

HP 75; **Immunities** acid, critical hits, mental, precision, unconscious, visual; **Weaknesses** bludgeoning 5, cold 5;

Resistances piercing 5, slashing 5

Speed 20 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee ♦ pseudopod +11, **Damage** 1d8+5 bludgeoning plus monstrous yeast

Monstrous Yeast (disease) Whenever a creature infected with monstrous yeast takes cold damage, they can make a new saving throw with a +2 circumstance bonus. Failure doesn't advance the disease; **Saving Throw** DC 18 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 round; **Stage 1** off-guard (1 hour); **Stage 2** enfeebled 1 and off-guard (1 hour); **Stage 3** enfeebled 2 and off-guard (1 day)

Treasure: A wooden plaque bearing the Princastle family crest (a pair of frothing mugs above the words "Hope triumphs over sorrow") still hangs from the wall above the yeast ooze's vat. When the inhabitants of Yua's Hope were forced to abandon the town, the Princastle family led the evacuation, saving many lives. Sadly, only the Princastles' youngest son, Ferrin, survived the journey to Vellumis. If the PCs think to take the plaque with them on their journey to Vellumis, they can track down the surviving Princastle once they reach the city. Ferrin tearfully accepts this keepsake of the loved ones he lost and rewards the PCs 20 gp for their kind deed.

A10. Eastlane Bridge

Severe 1

A steep ditch marks the eastern border of Yua's Hope, and the only eastbound road out of town crosses this bridge. Diligently maintained when it was first constructed, half a decade without repair has left the bridge as derelict as everything else in town.

The citizens of Yua's Hope recognized how difficult travel across the ditch was, and so the town rejoiced when the Eastlane Bridge was built. While the bridge has seen better days, a PC who succeeds at a DC 13 Crafting or Architecture Lore check confirms the structure can still support a cart or two. The survivors can cross the bridge with no risk of collapse.

Creature: When the PCs approach the bridge, they spot a bear on the far side of the ditch, about 60 feet away. From afar, the animal appears to be living, but PCs who approach within 30 feet quickly determine by

the creature's smell and shuffling movements that it's undead. The bear plods mindlessly near the east end of the bridge and doesn't cross into town unless the PCs attack it from a distance. The bear is tireless, however, guarding its end of the bridge day and night. The PCs can attempt to Sneak past the bear, but they take a -2 circumstance penalty to Stealth if any survivors travel with them (excluding the Brushpaws).

Alternatively, the PCs can avoid the bear entirely simply by leaving town from another direction. While taking an alternate route doesn't significantly increase the group's travel time, if the PCs fail their initial Survival check to Sense Direction as the group leaves town, treat the result as a critical failure instead. See the March to Vellumis section in Chapter 2 for more information about this check.

ZOMBIE BEAR

CREATURE 3

UNCOMMON LARGE MINDLESS UNDEAD UNHOLY ZOMBIE

Perception +8; darkvision

Skills Athletics +12

Str +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -5, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -3

Slow A zombie bear is permanently slowed 1 and can't use reactions.

AC 17; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6

HP 75, void healing (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360); **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** slashing 5, vitality 5

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ claw +12, **Damage** 1d10+7 piercing plus Grab (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 359)

Melee ♦ jaws +12, **Damage** 1d12+7 piercing

Murderous Mauler The zombie bear gains a +2 circumstance bonus to damage rolls against creatures it has grabbed.

Treasure: With a successful DC 15 Perception or Survival check, the PCs can locate the zombie bear's former den, a nearby cave filled with humanoid bones picked clean of flesh. Among the remains are the bones of a Lastwall crusader still equipped with full plate armor, a steel shield, and a +1 *longsword*.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Once the PCs finish exploring the ruins of Yua's Hope, they are ready to begin their journey to Vellumis. If they discovered the map of the surrounding area in the town hall (A8), the way to the city should be clear. If not, one of the other survivors remembers the city's relative direction. While the PCs have no way of knowing if the situation in Vellumis is any better than the one here, the port is likely the best chance the group has of survival.

Reward: Award the PCs 20 XP for each location they explore in Yua's Hope. If the PCs explore at least three locations without reaching an Evasion Threshold, award each character an additional 80 XP.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



CHAPTER 2: HUNTED

Normally an uneventful journey, travel between Yua's Hope and Vellumis has become exceptionally treacherous since Lastwall became the Gravelands. As the survivors make their way east from Yua's Hope, the wilderness seems unusually still, amplifying every sound the group makes. While living flora, fauna, and even other humanoid aren't entirely absent from the area, undead roam the Gravelands in far greater numbers than perhaps anywhere else on the continent.

To make matters worse, the presence of living souls in Yua's Hope hasn't gone unnoticed. Unbeknownst to the PCs, a former servant of Geb named **Seldeg Bhedlis** (male graveknight spymaster 20) recently dispatched one of his agents to Yua's Hope after learning an artifact he seeks might be located there. This artifact is none other than the one already in the survivors' possession—the *Lung Bloodstone of Arazni*. As the party departs from Yua's Hope, Seldeg's agent—a ghoulish hunter named **Omelia** (female ghoulish hunter 5)—spots the survivors and begins

to trail them, hoping to intercept them before they reach the safety of Vellumis. This chapter focuses on the PCs' attempt to thwart Omelia's pursuit and reach Vellumis with their precious cargo.

If the PCs earned XP at every opportunity in Chapter 1, they should be 2nd level by the time they leave Yua's Hope. If the group missed some encounters, consider having the PCs face off against trivial opponents, such as zombie shamblers (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 356), shortly after they depart. This will allow the PCs to reach 2nd level for the journey to Vellumis.

The Route to Safety

Before the PCs leave Yua's Hope, they must decide which route they're going to take to Vellumis. Two paths are available to them: the overland route and the river road route. The overland route means traveling straight across the countryside to Vellumis. The river road route entails following the Pinesflow River south until it feeds into



Lake Encarthan, then heading along the lake's shore east to Vellumis. Walking the river takes longer than traveling overland, reducing the amount of progress the group makes by half, but this route gives the survivors access to fresh water and other resources. Either path has its advantages and disadvantages, but regardless of the route the PCs choose, they encounter the same challenges and obstacles along the way.

The Overland Route: The PCs dash overland to Vellumis by the most direct path possible. This route is faster than following the Pinesflow River, but it's more difficult to navigate, and the terrain along the way is generally more barren. The overland route is 60 miles long, featuring one event every 5 miles. On this route, the PCs take a -4 circumstance penalty to checks made to Sense Direction and Subsist. If the Brushpaws travel with the PCs, reduce this penalty by -2.

The River Road Route: The PCs follow the Pinesflow River south from Yua's Hope until they reach the shores of Lake Encarthan, at which point they head to Vellumis. This path is slower than traveling overland but is simpler to follow. In addition, foraging for food on the river road is far easier than along an overland route. The PCs don't take penalties to checks made to Sense Direction or Subsist on the river road route, but the distance to Vellumis is 120 miles on this route, giving Omelia more time to observe and intercept the survivors. The river road route features one event every 10 miles.



Jono Brushpaw

Of Game and Ghouls

Mere days before the PCs first abandoned the crypts of Mordessa, the graveknight Seldeg Bhedlis dispatched one of his minions, a ghoul hunter named Omelia, to Yua's Hope after he learned that the *Lung Bloodstone of Arazni* had been hidden in the town before Tar-Baphon's invasion. A former servant of Geb who has since defected to the Whispering Tyrant, Seldeg seeks the *Bloodstones* to fuel a ritual he believes will swap Arazni's fate with that of her former champion, Iomedae. His twisted hope is that by redeeming Arazni, he will redeem himself.

For the moment, Seldeg's motivations are entirely beyond Omelia. All she knows is that her master sent her to Yua's Hope to scout the town for information about the *Bloodstone*. The presence of living creatures in the town surprises her, and when she spots the survivors leave Yua's Hope, she shadows them in the hopes they'll lead her to the missing artifact.

Omelia's pursuit provides much of the tension for this leg of the adventure. A wary hunter, she trails the survivors from a distance, usually beyond their line of sight. As

the group travels, you may occasionally make a secret Perception check for each of the PCs against Omelia's Stealth DC of 25. On a success, that PC catches a glimpse of a lone figure on the horizon. The figure is visible for only a moment, however, before it disappears into the shadows.

Once the PCs realize the group is being followed, they might try to outrun their pursuer. Unfortunately, Omelia's Speed of 30 feet means she likely outpaces the survivors, who can only move as fast as their slowest member (among both the PCs and NPCs). More concerning, because Omelia is undead, she can travel tirelessly and without being harassed by many of the Gravelands' denizens. Even if she loses the group temporarily, her familiarity with the area allows her to pick up their trail after a day or two.

The PCs might also think to turn the tables on Omelia by springing an ambush, but she is unlikely to fall for this ploy. If in doubt, make a Perception check for Omelia against the character with the lowest Stealth DC. On a success, Omelia spots

the trap and backs off, hoping to lull the survivors into a false sense of security. Only once the survivors near their obvious destination of Vellumis does Omelia confront the group, hopefully on her own terms.

The PCs' final confrontation with Omelia (as well as Omelia's stat block) can be found in **Event 18: The Chokepoint**. If the characters force an encounter with Omelia before that time, simply modify the information there to run the encounter somewhere before the end of the party's journey to Vellumis.

The March to Vellumis

In all, the journey from Yua's Hope to Vellumis covers 60 miles if the PCs choose the overland route, or 120 miles if they travel via the river road. If the slowest survivor has a Speed of 25 feet, the group travels 2-1/2 miles per hour, meaning they could reach Vellumis in 3 days if they travel overland, or in 6 days if they take the river road route. If the slowest survivor's Speed is 20 feet (which might be the case if anyone is wearing heavy armor or if a dwarf like Rokvel accompanies the group), the group's travel speed falls to 2 miles per hour, increasing the travel time to anywhere between 4 days (via the overland route) and 8 days (via the river road).

The above times assume the group travels 8 hours per day and use their remaining time to Subsist and rest. However, the PCs might instead try to make a dash to Vellumis, cutting short their journey further. This is fine, although keep in mind that a creature that goes more than 16 hours without rest becomes fatigued. See *Pathfinder*

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

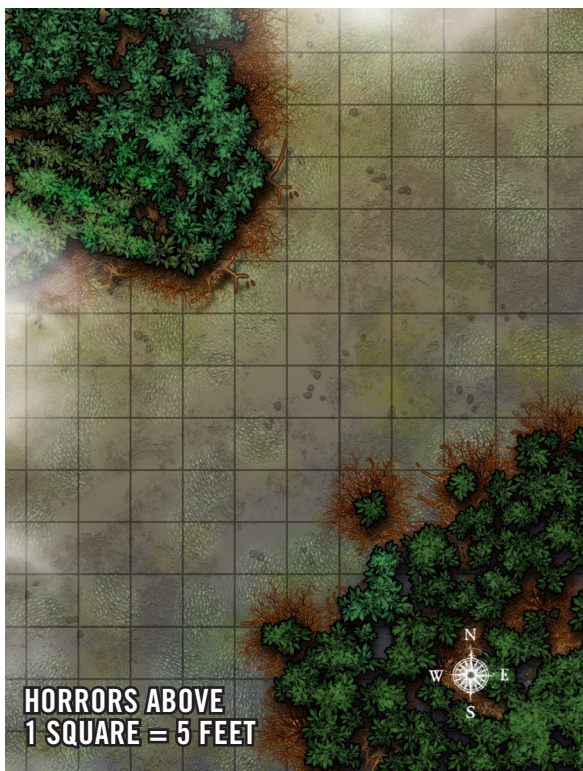
GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



Player Core 438 for more information about calculating the group's travel speed.

Much of the journey to Vellumis occurs in exploration mode, but as the survivors travel, they trigger events that play out in encounter mode. Each event occurs when the group's distance from Yua's Hope reaches that event's mile count, interrupting the journey (the PCs can't skip over events). An event's mile count is listed in the Event heading, with the first number referring to the count for the overland route and the second referring to the river road route. For example, "Mile 5/10" means that the encounter triggers on mile 5 of the overland route and mile 10 of the river road route.

When the survivors head out from Vellumis, and again each time the group resumes travel after an event, make a secret DC 13 Survival check to Sense Direction for the PC designated as the party's guide. On a failed check, the survivors get turned around, traveling for 1 hour before they realize the error and regain their bearings. The group makes no progress on the journey during this time. On a critical failure, the group instead travels for 4 hours without progress. Remember that if the group took the overland route, the PCs take a -4 circumstance penalty to checks made to Sense Direction.

The players can take exploration activities during the journey as normal, but note that the Hustle activity has no effect unless every survivor (including the NPCs) makes use of that activity. (Although if the group earned the Querulous Quartet's survivor boon, the survivors can use their highest Constitution modifier to determine how long they can Hustle, instead of the lowest modifier.) The typical

DC of skill checks made during the journey to Vellumis, including Survival checks to Subsist, is DC 17.

Event 8 (Mile 5/10): Horrors Above Low 2

With Yua's Hope still in sight behind them, the PCs move quickly to put distance between themselves and the undead horrors in the ruined town.

Creatures: Just 5 miles out from Yua's Hope, a flock of what appear to be normal birds alights from the branches of a nearby tree. As the birds descend on the survivors, it becomes clear the birds are a group of skeletal crows. Caught unaware in the middle of the wilderness, the PCs have no choice but to stand and fight the swarm of undead birds.

UNDEAD MURDER

CREATURE 3

UNCOMMON LARGE SKELETON SWARM UNDEAD UNHOLY

Perception +12; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Acrobatics +10, Stealth +7, Thievery +10

Str +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** -4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +0

AC 18; **Fort** +7; **Ref** +13; **Will** +8

HP 32, void healing (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360);

Immunities death effects, disease, paralyzed, poisoned, precision, swarm mind, unconscious; **Weaknesses** area damage 5, splash damage 5; **Resistances** cold 3, electricity 3, fire 3, piercing 3, slashing 3

Mindless Grudge **Trigger** A creature deals damage to the murder; **Effect** The murder begrudges the triggering creature. The murder's swarming hunger deals 3 extra damage to that creature. The effect ends if the murder begrudges a different creature.

Speed 5 feet, fly 35 feet

Swarming Hunger The murder's beaks and talons deal 2d6 piercing damage to each enemy in the swarm's space (DC 20 basic Reflex save). A creature that critically fails its save is blinded for 1d4 rounds as the murder focuses its attacks on clawing out the creature's eyes.

Event 9 (Mile 10/20): Way Marker

As the PCs move through a hilly area along the Pinesflow River or the middle of the flatlands, make a secret DC 15 Perception check for each character. On a success, that character spots a wooden way marker half-hidden in a stand of reeds. The way marker points the way to Vellumis. This indication that the group is heading in the right direction grants the survivors a +1 circumstance bonus to their Survival check to Sense Direction as they leave from this location.

Event 10 (Mile 15/30): Grove of Despair Low 3

Further along their trek, the PCs enter a grove of trees that stretches across the Pinesflow River and well into the countryside.

Hazard: After about a few hundred feet into the wooded area, a bank of fog descends upon the survivors. Eerie voices echo from just beyond the edge of the mist.

GROVE OF DESPAIR

HAZARD 3

UNCOMMON COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +12 (trained)

Description An eerie fog fills a lonely stretch of forest.

Disable DC 22 Diplomacy (untrained) to Request that the spirits leave or DC 20 Religion (trained) to exorcise the spirits. All creatures and objects within the fog are concealed, and all creatures and objects outside the fog are concealed to creatures within it.

Despairing Whispers  (auditory, emotion, fear, mental)

Trigger A living creature enters the haunted area; **Effect** The spirits manifest, whispering in the minds of creatures in the fog. Each creature in the area must succeed at a DC 22 Will save or be frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure). Frightened creatures are immobilized for as long as they remain frightened. The haunt then rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action; auditory, emotion, fear, mental) The haunt attempts an Intimidation check with a +12 modifier against the Will DC of each frightened creature as it fills their minds with haunting whispers.

Critical Success The creature takes 4d6 mental damage and its frightened condition increases by 1, to a maximum of frightened 3.

Success The creature takes 2d6 mental damage.

Failure The creature is unaffected.

Critical Failure The creature's frightened condition is reduced by 1.

Reset The haunt falls silent for 24 hours once all frightened creatures die or reduce their frightened condition's value to 0. During this time, a creature that isn't frightened can exorcise the spirits with a DC 20 Religion check, permanently destroying the haunt.

Treasure: If the PCs disable the haunt, the mists part, revealing a chest nestled among the roots of an ancient tree. Inside the chest are two *lesser healing potions*.

Event 11 (Mile 20/40): Crusader Outpost

Nearly a third of the way into their journey, the survivors spot a crusader outpost atop a distant hill. A hastily erected (and now half-collapsed) wooden palisade surrounds the crumbling tower. If the PCs explore the outpost, they find the site devoid of creatures—living or otherwise. The tower's higher levels collapsed years ago, but a simple shrine rests against the far wall on the ground floor. The symbols of the deities to which the shrine was dedicated have crumbled away, save for a lone female figure dancing before a crescent moon. A character who succeeds at a DC 12 Religion check recognizes the symbol as that of Ashava, goddess of moonlight, dancing, and lost spirits.

Blessings of the True Spark: As the goddess of the lonely, Ashava leads dead spirits along the River of Souls and living ones out of hardship. If the PCs take shelter in the outpost, that night each survivor dreams of a beautiful woman of their ancestry dressed in a



gown of starlight who leads them in a dance among the stars. Upon waking, each PC gains 1d6+5 temporary Hit Points that last 8 hours.

Event 12 (Mile 25/50): Abandoned Cottage Moderate 2

As the PCs move closer toward Vellumis, they happen upon a cottage, still standing despite years of neglect.

Creatures: The ghost of the woman who once lived in the cottage manifests as soon a PC steps through the door. The ghost accuses the intruders of slaughtering her family and lunges forward to drain their life force. If the PCs destroy the ghost, a search of the cottage reveals the bones of the woman intermingled with those of two small children. If the PCs bury the remains, the ghost is permanently destroyed as she and her children finally find peace.

GHOST COMMONER

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Monster Core 161

Initiative Perception +10

Survivors: If any survivors previously parted ways with the PCs, one or more of them might have found their way here. If so, the PCs stumble upon the ghost menacing these characters. If the PCs defeat the ghost, the survivors ask to rejoin the PCs.

Treasure: A PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check to Search the cottage discovers a hidey-hole beneath a loose floorboard. Wrapped in a dirty cloth inside the hidey hole are four *predator's claw* talismans.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

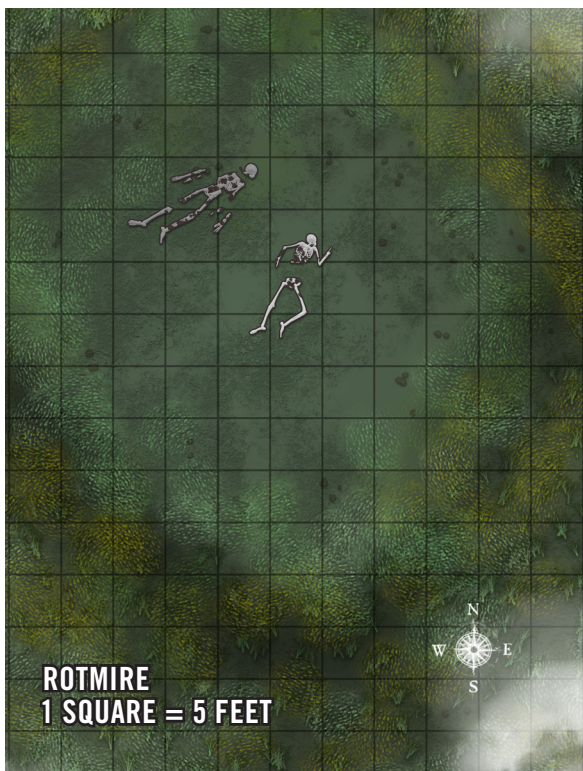
GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



Event 13 (Mile 30/60): Grove Under Siege **Low 2**

Prior to Tar-Baphon's invasion, a circle of druids blessed this isolated grove, which continues to flourish despite the lich's influence. The local animal population relies on the grove for food, but this also makes it a hunting ground for undead horrors. Use the Horrors Above map on page 32 for this encounter.

Creatures: A skeletal goblin riding a reanimated wolf skeleton lurks among the trees. When the PCs arrive, the goblin and his mount attack suddenly and swiftly.

SKELETAL GOBLIN **CREATURE 2**

Skeletal champion (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 312)

Initiative Perception +8

WOLF SKELETON **CREATURE 0**

Pathfinder Book of the Dead 147

Initiative Perception +8

Development: If the PCs travel along the overland route, they ignore the circumstance penalty to Subsist within the grove. If they are following the river road route, treat the result of Survival checks to Subsist within the grove as one step better.

Event 14 (Mile 35/70): Horrifying Monstrosity **Severe 2**

Just over halfway to Vellumis, the PCs wander into a battlefield strewn with the bodies of long-dead crusaders, their bones visible beneath righteous armaments.

Creatures: Hulking monstrosities shamble across the Gravelands, and while the PCs have been fortunate to avoid the worst of Tar-Baphon's horrors, they spot a zombie hulk shortly after the group enters the battlefield. The PCs can attempt to Sneak past the zombie, but they take a -2 circumstance penalty to Stealth if any survivors (excluding the Brushpaws) accompany them.

WEAK ZOMBIE HULK **CREATURE 5**

Pathfinder Monster Core 7, 357

Initiative Perception +6

Treasure: If the PCs defeat the zombie hulk, they have time to search the remains of the fallen crusaders. Among the rusty and broken armaments is a +1 *greatsword*, a +1 *shortbow*, and a set of +1 *handwraps of mighty blows*.

Event 15 (Mile 40/80): Rotmire **Severe 2**

As the PCs clear the halfway point on their journey, they encounter a mire choked with sickly reeds. The stench of death hovers over the mire, squeezing the breath from the lungs of the living.

Hazard: A patch of quicksand threatens to swallow anyone who crosses the mire.

QUICKSAND **HAZARD 3**

Pathfinder GM Core 107

Initiative +12 (trained) (or -10 and no minimum proficiency if the surface is disturbed)

Creatures: If any of the survivors become stuck in the quicksand, the disturbance attracts the notice of a lacedon that haunts the mire.

LACEDON **CREATURE 2**

Pathfinder Book of the Dead 104

Initiative Perception +7

Development: The PCs can avoid the mire by skirting the edges of the area, but the detour requires an extra hour of travel time. In addition, if the PCs fail their Survival check to Sense Direction as the group leaves the area, treat the result as a critical failure instead.

Event 16 (Mile 45/90): Scouting Party **Moderate 2**

Once the PCs are three-quarters of the way to Vellumis, they spot a curl of smoke rising behind a stretch of hills, the first hint of sapient life the survivors have encountered on their journey.

Creatures: If the PCs investigate the smoke, they encounter three orc scouts huddled around a campfire. The scouts are members of the Burning Sun Hold, which currently inhabits Castle Firrine (see the third adventure in this book, "Of Blood and Faith," for more information). After a trying encounter with a band of

zombies, the scouts made camp in these hills to rest. Though suspicious of strangers, the orcs are tired, far from home, and secretly relieved the PCs aren't undead. The scouts jump to their feet as the PCs approach but hold off from attacking immediately.

The orcs' leader, a young but cautious warrior named Niskar Balefire, does the talking while his subordinates, Ghrona and Parchot, stand ready with their weapons. The orcs begin the encounter as indifferent, but if the PCs improve their attitude to at least friendly, Niskar invites them to share their camp for the night and offers to trade rations for any treasure the PCs might have scavenged to this point. Altogether, the orcs have enough rations to feed themselves for the next 3 days, though they're willing to part with only half that amount (enough to feed a Medium creature for 6 days). Even if the PCs have nothing valuable to trade, the orcs might give the survivors a few days' worth of rations out of pity.

NISKAR, GHRONA, AND PARCHOT

CREATURE 1

Orc veterans (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 258)

Initiative Perception +6

Developments: If the PCs fail to improve their attitude, the orcs brusquely demand the survivors move along. However, before they do, the orcs can share what they know about Lastwall's recent history, including confirming that Vellumis remains one of the few bastions of safety against the undead invaders.

If Garaag Sunbrand travels with the PCs, the presence of another orc grants the PCs a +1 circumstance bonus to checks made to influence the scouts. Unless the meeting goes poorly, Garaag decides to join the scouts, parting ways with the other survivors.

Reward: Award the PCs 60 XP each if they improve the orcs' attitude to friendly or helpful.

Event 17 (Mile 50/100): Forgotten Bridge Severe 2

The PCs approach a ravine spanned by a ramshackle bridge. An outcropping on the far side overlooks the area.

Hazard: The ravine is 20 feet deep, and it requires a successful DC 16 Athletics check to Climb the ravine's unstable sides. Alternatively, the PCs can brave the ramshackle bridge.

DECREPIT BRIDGE

HAZARD 2

MECHANICAL

Stealth DC 14 (trained)

Description The 30-foot-long, 10-foot-wide bridge groans under the weight of those who cross it.

Perilous Sway ➤ **Trigger** A Medium or larger creature Strides 10 feet or more in the bridge's area; **Effect** All creatures on the bridge must attempt a DC 18 Reflex save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.



Success The creature is clumsy 1 until the beginning of its next turn.

Failure The creature falls prone.

Critical Failure The creature falls from the bridge, landing in the ravine 20 feet below.

Collapse Each time the decrepit bridge triggers its Perilous Sway after the first, attempt a DC 5 flat check. On a failure, the bridge collapses. All creatures on the bridge fall 20 feet into the ravine, taking falling damage normally.

Creatures: A group of three skeletal soldiers watch over the bridge from their hiding spot atop the outcropping, about 80 feet from the far end of the bridge. The skeletons unleash a barrage of arrows as the survivors cross the bridge or climb down the ravine, using Stealth for their initiative. They continue firing until they run out of ammunition, the survivors move beyond range of their bows, or until the PCs engage them in melee.

SKELETAL SOLDIERS (3)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Book of the Dead 147

Initiative Stealth +5

Development: If they spot the skeletal soldiers before crossing the bridge, the PCs might decide to avoid the ravine altogether. Finding an alternate route adds an hour to the survivors' journey. In addition, if the PCs fail their Survival check to Sense Direction as they leave the ravine behind, treat the result as a critical failure instead.

Treasure: In addition to their armor and weapons, one

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

of the skeletons carries a signal horn. Made of polished bone with onyx inlays, the horn is worth 20 gp.

Event 18 (Mile 55/110): The Chokepoint Extreme 2

As the survivors crest a rise, they spot the crusader city of Vellumis in the lowlands below. Beyond the city, the waters of Lake Encarthan stretch to the horizon. While the PCs are no doubt eager to reach their destination, the hills around Vellumis offer a defensible position and protection from the elements, making this the perfect spot to camp before the final push to the city.

Creatures: Omelia pieced together where the survivors were heading days ago, but she waits until Vellumis comes into view before confronting the group. Shortly after midnight, she advances on the survivors' camp. Confident she's more than a match for these ragged mortals, she demands to speak with whichever PC she deems to be the group's leader.

Ideally, Omelia wants to learn as much about the survivors as possible before slaughtering them. She asks what business the group had in Yua's Hope and why they

suddenly abandoned the town. Most importantly, she wants to determine if the survivors have the artifact Seldeg Bhedlis seeks. Though she knows nothing about the *Lung Bloodstone*—and might not even realize the PCs carry it—the fact that the survivors left Yua's Hope just as Seldeg expressed interest in the town is too much of a coincidence for Omelia to dismiss. She believes the events must be related and hopes that learning more will raise her standing in Seldeg's eyes. She interrogates the PCs for as long as they continue sharing useful information. If the survivors offer her nothing or become belligerent, she's happy to simply kill them all, certain that Seldeg's necromancers can extract whatever information he needs from their corpses.

Regardless of how the showdown with Omelia plays out, the ghoul has no intention of letting the survivors reach Vellumis, with or without the *Bloodstone*. If the survivors press on to the city rather than making camp here, she ambushes them before they leave the hills, using Stealth for her initiative.

Bloodstone's Blessing: Even if the PCs survived the Gravelands relatively unscathed, Omelia should be a formidable opponent. Luckily, the survivors possess a weapon that could turn the battle in their favor. One round after the battle begins, the *Lung Bloodstone* recognizes the characters' tenacity and infuses them with Arazni's unyielding drive to survive. The artifact pulses with a red light that wraps each PC in a crimson aura. For the next minute, each PC gains a +2 status bonus to their attacks and DCs, as well as 10 temporary Hit Points that last for 1 minute. These benefits are in addition to the *Bloodstone's* other properties, described in full on page 109.

Treasure: In addition to her gear, Omelia carries scouting reports she's made about the area between Yua's Hope and Vellumis. If the PCs deliver the reports to the authorities in Vellumis, the Knights of Lastwall award the party 120 gp for their efforts.



OMELIA

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE MEDIUM GHOUL UNDEAD UNHOLY

Variant female ghoul hunter (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 162)

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages Common, Necril

Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +11, Gravelands Lore +9, Intimidation +9, Stealth +13, Survival +13

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

Items +1 composite longbow, leather armor

AC 21; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11

HP 75, void healing (*Monster Core* 360); **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Stench (aura, olfactory) 10 feet, DC 22 (*Monster Core* 360)

Speed 30 feet, burrow 5 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +14 (finesse), **Damage** 1d8+4 piercing

Melee ♦ claws +14 (finesse), **Damage** 1d6+4 slashing plus Grab (*Monster Core* 359)

Ranged ♦ composite longbow +15 (deadly d10, magical, propulsive, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30)

Lacedon

feet), **Damage** 1d8+4 piercing
Consume Flesh ♦ (manipulate) 3d6 HP (*Monster Core* 162)
Ghoul Whispers ♦ (auditory, linguistic, occult) DC 22 (*Monster Core* 162)
Grave Knowledge (occult) +13 skill modifier (*Monster Core* 162)
Hunt Prey ♦ (concentrate) Omelia designates a single creature she can see and hear, or one she's Tracking, as her prey. She gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to Seek the prey and to Survival checks to Track the prey. The first time Omelia hits her designated prey in a round, she deals an additional 1d8 precision damage. These effects last until she uses Hunt Prey again.
Swift Leap ♦ (move) (*Monster Core* 163)

Event 19 (Mile 60/120): Safe at Last

Beyond the hills lies Vellumis, one of the last mortal strongholds in the Gravelands. As the PCs arrive, the guards open the city gates to them and rush to provide any healing magic they might need.

After several days of well-earned rest, the PCs are granted an audience with **Aylunna Varvatos** (female human cleric of Iomedae 14), to whom they can present the *Lung Bloodstone of Arazni*. After listening to their tale, Aylunna assures the PCs that the artifact is now in good hands. If the PCs also deliver Omelia's scouting reports, a brief inspection of the papers is enough for Aylunna to recognize their strategic value. She immediately orders an attendant to fetch a hefty reward of 120 gp, more than enough for each PC to build their lives anew.

Reward: Award the PCs 80 XP each if they deliver the *Lung Bloodstone* to Aylunna. Award them an additional 10 XP for each NPC that survives the journey to Vellumis.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

After the meeting with Aylunna, the Knights of Lastwall offer to help the survivors settle in Vellumis or relocate to Absalom, whichever they prefer. The PCs can witness the following outcomes for any of the survivors who survived the journey to Vellumis.

Garaag Sunbrand eventually returns to Belkzen. If the PCs continue their adventures in the Gravelands, Garaag and his hold might help their future efforts. Alternatively, if Garaag joined the orc scouts in **Event 16: Scouting Party**, he accompanies the orcs to Castle Firrine. In this case, the players might encounter Garaag again during this book's third adventure, "Of Blood and Faith."

Hurdauw Pulsoma leaves with Jystolo for Absalom. In the months to come, she becomes involved in Ulthun II's efforts to garner support for the Knights of Lastwall. Later, Hurdauw might connect the PCs with the leader, who enlists the party for a vital diplomatic mission.

Marko Blightender discovers that one of his mothers,

Amelia, survived the invasion of Lastwall and now lives in Vellumis. Sadly, the woman has no memory of her son—or anything that happened in the years following the arrival of the undead. With the PCs' help, she might be able to recover her memories, as well as the last known location of Marko's other mother, who remains missing.

Rokvel Hardbrow travels to the Five Kings Mountains, hoping to help arm the dwarven armies against the Whispering Tyrant. She might return to Lastwall at the head of one such army, lending much-needed aid to the PCs' continuing fight against Tar-Baphon.

After a week recovering in Absalom, the Brushpaws return to the Gravelands, identifying threats such as hidden Whispering Way enclaves, which the PCs must eradicate.

The Querulous Quartet plays their first show before a non-captive audience in years. They then set sail across Lake Encarthan for venues abroad. When the ship fails to arrive at its destination, the PCs might be called upon to track down the missing musicians.



CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



ASHES FOR OZEM

Ashes for Ozem 40

The characters are summoned to the Blighted Bower, a corrupted grove in the heart of the Southern Fangwood, by the graveknight Seldeg Bhedlis. Seldeg has assembled the party for a singular mission: to infiltrate Fort Ozem, recover a powerful artifact hidden in its vaults, and leave nothing but ashes in their wake. While Seldeg gives the PCs an opportunity to research the fort before the mission begins, he warns them that time is running short. Failure is not an option.

Playing Evil Characters

“Ashes for Ozem” is a short adventure in which players take the roles of Whispering Way agents assembled for an infiltration mission by Tar-Baphon’s new lieutenant, **Seldeg Bhedlis** (male graveknight spymaster 20). As the core belief of the Whispering Way is that undeath is the truest form of existence, this an excellent opportunity for players to create characters who are either necromancers or intelligent undead. At the very least, the characters’ motivations for working with Seldeg should be questionable, morally speaking. With that in mind, consider the following points before beginning the adventure.

Cooperation: To work for Seldeg Bhedlis is to advance the cause of evil. In this adventure, players assume the roles of characters whose motivations are wicked or villainous, even if their goals don’t align directly with those of Seldeg or each other. The only requirement is that the characters cooperate with each other and remain committed to their mission. They can go to whatever lengths they need to accomplish their task, but they shouldn’t attempt to undermine or betray each other. While creating characters for this adventure, the players should work together to create a party that can cooperate without much inter-party strife.

Safety Tools: While the goal of “Ashes for Ozem” is to infiltrate Fort Ozem and retrieve an artifact of great power, as agents of the Whispering Way the characters might perform any number of heinous acts before completing their mission, including the killing of innocents. Before the adventure begins, talk with your players about what they can expect and what their boundaries are. You might wish to include the use of safety tools like lines and veils or the X-Card (*Pathfinder GM Core 7*) to help ensure responsible and mutually enjoyable play. While this adventure presents Seldeg as an irredeemably evil figure with no love for the fort’s defenders, he discourages the PCs from engaging in wanton sadism—there will be plenty of time for that, he suggests, once the mission is complete.

IN THE SERVICE OF EVIL

In “Ashes for Ozem,” the PCs are a group of Whispering Way cultists assembled by the graveknight Seldeg Bhedlis to recover a powerful artifact, the *Chalice of Ozem*, which lies hidden in the catacombs beneath Fort Ozem. While Seldeg is less than forthcoming about his motivations for wanting the chalice, he gives the PCs access to an extradimensional library to plan for their assault and warns them that the fort isn’t abandoned as it appears.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“Ashes for Ozem” is designed for four characters.

7

The PCs begin this adventure at 7th level.

8

The PCs should reach 8th level by the end of the adventure.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



ASHES FOR OZEM

INTRODUCTION

The Knights of Lastwall have been a thorn in Tar-Baphon's side since their days as the Knights of Ozem. During the Shining Crusade, the knights imprisoned Tar-Baphon inside the tyrant's own fortress-tower of Gallowspire, a captivity that lasted nearly 300 years. While Tar-Baphon eventually overcame the Knights' foolish attempt to contain him, the name Ozem remains a bitter one for the Whispering Tyrant, as well as for his newest lieutenant, the graveknight Seldeg Bhedlis.

Seldeg Bhedlis, a former Knight of Ozem, believes he has found a way to erase the name Ozem from history forever. He plans to send a team of Whispering Way agents to infiltrate Fort Ozem and destroy it from the inside out. Seldeg's motivations for sponsoring such a mission are more complicated than mere revenge, however. Recently, Seldeg discovered that a powerful artifact, the *Chalice of Ozem*, was hidden in the catacombs beneath Fort Ozem. Unknown even to the

Whispering Tyrant, Seldeg wants the chalice for himself, as he plans to use the artifact to power a ritual that, if successful, will change history.

Since abandoning his duties to the Ghost King Geb, Seldeg Bhedlis has worked to gain the trust of his new master, Tar-Baphon, all the while hiding his ultimate goal of "saving" the goddess Arazni. To enact this plan, Seldeg has developed a ritual that will swap Arazni's fate with that of another goddess, Iomedae. Rewriting the history of gods requires magic the likes of which Golarion has never seen, and so Seldeg has set about gathering a number of artifacts to fuel his ritual, including the *Bloodstones of Arazni* and the *Chalice of Ozem*. Recently, Seldeg captured a researcher interested in the fate of the *Bloodstones* after the destruction of Vigil, and from her he learned the location of those artifacts. Meanwhile, Seldeg's spies have revealed that the *Chalice of Ozem* lies hidden beneath Fort Ozem, a seemingly abandoned fort long rumored to be a stronghold of the secretive Nirmathi freedom fighters, the



Chernasardo Rangers. Though Seldeg considers wiping out the rangers stationed at the fort a pleasant side effect of his mission (as well a convenient cover story for his actions), the graveknight's desire to destroy Fort Ozem has only one real purpose: to retrieve the *Chalice of Ozem* so that he might use it in his quest to restore Arazni to her former glory.

Seldeg's intelligence about Fort Ozem is correct—the Chernasardo Rangers are indeed using Fort Ozem as a hideout. The rangers oversee the fort with the blessing of the church of Iomedae, who maintain a shrine inside in honor of the time their goddess lived there briefly as a mortal. The fort's gates are also open to the Knights of Lastwall, whose members use the stronghold as a waypoint during their missions. All three groups operate under the command of Chernasardo warden **Arsiella Dei** (page 122), who considers her service at Fort Ozem an honor to her father, Irgal Nirmath, the founder of the Rangers and the man for whom Nirmathas is named.

While Arsiella believes she is ready for anything, the Whispering Way agents Seldeg sends to recover the *Chalice of Ozem* are determined to prove her wrong. With any luck, by the end of the night only the ashes of Fort Ozem will remain.

A SUMMONS

The adventure begins as the characters respond to a summons by Seldeg Bhedlis. The graveknight has asked the PCs to meet him in the Blighted Bower, a grove corrupted centuries ago by the Darkblight, a supernatural infection that plagues the Southern Fangwood. Despite the grove's proximity to Fort Ozem, magic conceals the Bower from the prying eyes of the Chernasardo Rangers and their allies. How Seldeg contacted the characters is up to the players, and you might encourage each player to describe their journey to the Blighted Bower to help familiarize everyone with their characters.

Once all the characters are assembled, read or paraphrase the following.

The Blighted Bower is a grove of trees whose crooked branches interweave to block the sky. Natural light within the bower has been replaced by a dim, greenish glow emanating from strange sigils carved into the trunks of the trees. This light is just bright enough to illuminate the face of a figure standing alone at the center of the grove. He is a human man in his late-middle years, with wan skin and a black cloak that blends with the bower's shadows.

"Come," the figure says, his gravelly voice slicing through the otherwise silent grove. "The time has come to destroy one of the last remnants of the pathetic Knights of Ozem and strike a personal blow against their precious god. My sources tell me Iomedae's followers have hidden an artifact of great power in the ruins of Fort Ozem, a stronghold the knights have maintained since the days of the Shining Crusade. You will enter the fort, track down this relic, and bring it to me.

Anything you find along the way is yours to keep, but be sure to destroy the place—and anyone foolish enough to oppose you—on your way out. Tar-Baphon tires of these troublesome mortals. They deserve nothing more than to be ground into dust."

Assuming the characters are open to Seldeg's mission, the graveknight answers any questions they might have.

What is known about Fort Ozem? "It is just one of the many strongholds the Knights of Ozem built during their crusade against the

Whispering Tyrant. With their order now in ruins, I hear the fort has become quite the eyesore: overgrown grounds, crumbling walls, spiderwebs, and dust. It's almost too abandoned—recent reports suggest that the fort continues to serve as a waypoint for the knights and their allies. I will leave you with a way to learn more about the location before your mission begins. I strongly suggest you use it."

But the Knights of Ozem are gone! What other dangers we should be aware of? At this, Seldeg sneers. "Like so many of the living, those pathetic crusaders refuse to accept that they've been beaten. They've renamed themselves the Knights of Lastwall, and new allies flock to their banner by the day. A group of so-called freedom fighters calling themselves the Chernasardo Rangers have been spotted near the fort. The rangers have more arrows than sense, but I suspect they might be lurking about the fort to protect the artifact on behalf of the knights. I almost feel sorry for them."

What is this artifact we're looking for? "I assembled you for your skills, not your curiosity, but I will say this: the artifact is a silver chalice embedded with rubies shaped like drops of blood. The chalice is precious to the followers of Iomedae, and as such is likely to be guarded by her lackeys. Take care. If they or these Chernasardo Rangers are indeed inside the fort, they will deliver the artifact to a new location if they feel it's under threat. You don't wish to return to me empty-handed."

How long do we have for this mission? While Seldeg is under no particular time pressure to retrieve the *Chalice of Ozem*, he worries that Fort Ozem's defenders will retreat with the chalice if they suspect the Whispering



CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

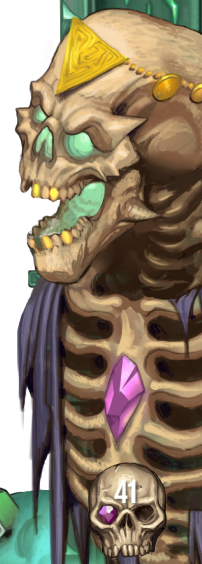
INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZZETTER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX



Way has discovered its location. “We will meet here again in 12 hours. Should you not arrive, I will consider the mission to be a failure.” He fixes the characters with an icy stare. “Failure is not recommended.”

Recalling Knowledge

The players might ask what their characters know about Fort Ozem or the chalice Seldeg has asked them to retrieve. You can make secret checks to Recall Knowledge for the characters, depending on their subject of interest. A failure on either check grants no information, and a critical success grants additional information.

Society or Warfare Lore

A PC who attempts a DC 23 Society or DC 21 Warfare Lore check to Recall Knowledge about Fort Ozem might know more about the fort’s history.

Critical Success During the Shining Crusade, Fort Ozem was briefly commanded by Iomedae herself, who at that time had not yet ascended to godhood. The general design of the fort follows a “sword-and-hilt” layout, with the forward portion designed to wear down intruders. The PCs gain a +1 circumstance bonus to checks made to navigate the fort.

Success Fort Ozem is a fortress in the Southern Fangwood, just an hour away from the Blighted Bower. The Knights of Ozem once used the fort as a staging point in the war against the Whispering Tyrant. Though the fort appears abandoned, it’s rumored the Chernasardo Rangers and their allies now use the location as a hideout.

Critical Failure The Knights of Ozem abandoned Fort Ozem centuries ago. Its grounds have since been consumed by the Darkblight.

Religion or Iomedae Lore

A PC who attempts a DC 23 Iomedae Lore or DC 25 Religion check to Recall Knowledge about the *Chalice of Ozem* might know more about the chalice’s history.

Critical Success Iomedae held the *Chalice of Ozem* during her battle against Erum-Hel, one of the Whispering Tyrant’s officers, during the Battle of Three Sorrows. Since Iomedae’s ascension, the chalice has become an artifact in its own right. The PCs gain a +1 circumstance bonus checks made to identify the chalice (including discerning the forgery in area A20).

Success Seldeg’s description of the artifact matches that of the *Chalice of Ozem*, which was thought to have been lost during the Battle of Three Sorrows. According to rumors, the chalice can’t be harmed by any substance it holds, and liquid placed within the chalice will never spill.

Critical Failure The PC identifies the artifact Seldeg seeks as the *Crimson Cup*, a relic capable of returning an undead creature to the ranks of the living.

THE FLAYED FILES

As Seldeg promised, the graveknight has a resource the characters can use to learn more about Fort Ozem. Part prison and part library, the Flayed Files is an extradimensional space where Seldeg stores the souls of those who’ve either failed or opposed him. The pages of the “books” contained in the Files are inked with the final confessions of these unfortunate souls. While the Flayed Files has proven an invaluable resource for the graveknight over the centuries, staying too long in the library is dangerous, as its magic etches hidden truths into the flesh of those who linger there, creating lasting wounds.

Touching his hand to one of the sigil-scarred trees at the edge of the Blighted Bower, Seldeg opens a portal to the Flayed Files. Once the characters enter the Files, they can use the library’s resources as they choose, although Seldeg warns them that time passes normally within the extradimensional space. They shouldn’t dawdle, lest they run out of time to complete their mission. (Seldeg knowingly omits the harmful effects the Files can have on visitors who overstay their welcome.)

Using the Library

The Flayed Files is designed to be used with the Research subsystem (*GM Core* 190). All rules needed to use the subsystem are presented here.

Time in the Flayed Files passes in rounds, each of which takes 1 hour. During each round, characters use the Research exploration activity to gain Research Points. As time passes and the party gains RP, they gain more information but must also deal with the library’s efforts to make them a part of its collection.

After every 3 rounds of research, the Flayed Files attempt to etch a truth from each character’s life into their flesh (or flesh equivalent if the character doesn’t have flesh). Each character takes 4d6 slashing damage (DC 25 basic Fortitude save). On a failed save, the character is also drained 1 (or drained 2 on a critical failure). Further failed saves increase the drained value by 1, to a maximum of drained 4.

RESEARCH

CONCENTRATE | EXPLORATION

You peruse the Flayed Files to learn more about the topic at hand. Choose your section of the library and attempt a skill check. The skills to use and the DC for the check depend on the choice you made.

Critical Success You gain 2 RP.

Success You gain 1 RP.

Critical Failure You make a false discovery and lose 1 RP.



THE PLAYED FILES

UNIQUE EXTRADIMENSIONAL

The Played Files is a circular path between two impossibly tall walls, each lined with shelves filled with books bound in the flesh of Seldeg Bhedlis's enemies (and in some cases, his former allies). The path has no beginning or end; walking in any direction always leads to a new section of the library.

Ears To the Ground This section contains books made from the bodies of Seldeg's former spies and informants. The books all hold rumors the author believed to be true. As some of these rumors contradict the others, it is up to the reader to decide whose ears were most discerning; **Maximum RP 10**

Research Checks DC 18 Perception to Sense Motive to determine if the book's author is reliable, DC 23 Society to check the book's information against known facts.

Defiant in Death The books in this section contain the souls of Seldeg's former foes. Even in death, these souls are loath to give up their secrets to the enemy; **Maximum RP 10**

Research Checks DC 20 Arcana, Religion, Society, or appropriate Lore to locate a book about a certain topic; DC 20 Athletics to Force Open a book as the soul of its author attempts to hold it shut; DC 23 Intimidation to demand answers from the book.

Traitorous Tomes These books are made from those who betrayed the Chernasardo Rangers, the church of Iomedae, or the Knights of Lastwall. While the books contain important information about the enemies of Tar-Baphon, the souls of these traitors continue to conceal the truth, constantly shifting the words written on their pages; **Maximum RP 15**

Research Checks DC 25 Perception to catch sight of hidden truths before the words transform, DC 28 Occultism to will the words to remain still.

5 Research Points The PCs confirm that the Chernasardo Rangers have allowed Fort Ozem to go to ruin to conceal its true purpose. They use the fort as a base of operations despite its current appearance. They share control of the fort with the church of Iomedae and the Knights of Lastwall.

10 Research Points The PCs learn the rough layout of Fort Ozem, including that it follows a "sword-and-hilt" design. The rundown building at the front of the fort is a shell designed to frustrate intruders. The characters also learn the location of the hidden entrances in the fort's outer wall, as well as the secret door in area **A15**.

15 Research Points The PCs discover that the church of Iomedae maintains the space Iomedae used during her time at the fort as a showroom in her honor. This room contains an entrance to the catacombs beneath the fort.

20 Research Points The PCs learn that the artifact Seldeg seeks, the *Chalice of Ozem*, is hidden in the catacombs beneath Fort Ozem. They discover a map that details a rough layout of the catacombs and showing the exact location of the *Chalice* (area **B9**).

RESEARCH 7

SCOUTING FORT OZEM

Once the characters finish their research in the Played Files, they merely need to walk along the library's ever-circling pathway to return to the portal that brought them there. Stepping through, they once again find themselves on the edges of the Blighted Bower—only this time, Seldeg Bhedlis is nowhere to be found. Without the graveknight to guide them further, the PCs' only choice is to make their way to Fort Ozem to complete their mission.

Fort Ozem is an hour's walk from the Blighted Bower. With the information the characters now have, finding their way to the fort should be a simple task. As the characters approach Fort Ozem, proceed to **Event 1: Routine Patrol**.

Event 1: Routine Patrol

Moderate 7

As the PCs make their way through the Southern Fangwood to Fort Ozem, they stumble upon a pair of Chernasardo Rangers on a routine patrol of the area around the fort. This encounter gives the party an opportunity to dispose of two of the fort's defenders without alerting Fort Ozem as a whole. Alternatively, one of more of the characters can shadow the rangers back to the fort and learn more about the fort's defenses.

FOLLOW A RANGER

EXPLORATION

You follow a member of the Chernasardo Rangers as they make their way through the Southern Fangwood. Attempt a DC 28 Stealth check to Sneak or a DC 27 Survival check to Track. This activity takes 1 hour.

Critical Success As success, except you draw close enough to the rangers to hear them speak a code phrase ("Odra San Reh") before opening the door.

Success You follow the rangers to Fort Ozem and watch them enter the fort through a secret entrance in the fort's outer wall (see the general description of Fort Ozem on page 44).

Failure You lose track of the rangers, wasting 1 hour and gaining no useful information.

Critical Failure The rangers notice someone is following them and set an ambush for you and your companions. During the encounter, the rangers gain a +1 circumstance bonus to initiative.

CHERNASARDO RANGERS (2)

CREATURE 7

Page 44

Initiative Perception +18

Development: If the characters engage in combat with the rangers (either intentionally or because one of them critically failed the Follow a Ranger activity), the rangers fight until one of them is killed, at which point the other retreats to Fort Ozem. If the rangers alert the fort, the PCs immediately gain 2 Awareness Points. If the PCs kill the rangers or otherwise prevent them from returning to Fort Ozem, remove the rangers from the fort's total

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX

number of defenders. However, the fort's other defenders eventually notice that the rangers are late returning from their patrol, and the PCs gain 1 AP. See Infiltrating Fort Ozem on page 45 for details about Awareness Points.

FORT OZEM

Constructed by the Knights of Ozem during the Shining Crusade, Fort Ozem is a hidden stronghold within the Southern Fangwood. Its gates stand at the top of the hill on which the fort rests, its tallest structures just barely peeking above the trees. A series of tunnels below the fort serve as catacombs for the honored dead of both the Knights of Ozem and the Chernasardo Rangers.

While never intended to serve as a long-term defensive position, the fort is designed so that it can be secured by even a small group of defenders. It uses a sword-and-hilt layout, which places a largely ornamental but heavily fortified structure near the fort's entrance, with more vital areas located in a stronghold at the rear of the fort. To further discourage unwelcome visitors, the rangers and their allies have allowed the fort's grounds to fall into disrepair, while sowing traps throughout.

Fort Ozem's Defenders

Once the player characters are inside Fort Ozem's walls, they must contend with members of three different groups. The Chernasardo Rangers use the fort as their base of operations in the Southern Fangwood. Meanwhile, the priests of Iomedae tend a shrine that honors the time the goddess spent as a mortal living in the fort. Finally, knights reclaimant from the Knights of Lastwall use the fort as a safe house when passing through the Southern Fangwood. All are under the command of Arsiella Dei, the Chernasardo warden who oversees the fort.

As the characters' mission begins, 16 total defenders operate within the fort: 9 Chernasardo Rangers, 3 priests of Iomedae, 3 knights reclaimant, and fort commander Arsiella Dei. During the infiltration, it isn't necessary to keep track of the exact position of these defenders. The adventure's area descriptions note locations frequented by particular defenders, and you should feel free to move defenders around as works best to provide obstacles or opportunities for the PCs throughout the adventure.

CHERNASARDO RANGER

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON MEDIUM HUMANOID

Perception +18

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +12, Forest Lore +13, Medicine +15, Nature +16, Stealth +17, Survival +17

Str +3, **Dex** +6, **Con** +2, **Int** +3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

Items dagger, shortbow (20 arrows), +1 shortsword, specialist snare kit

AC 25; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +18, **Will** +13

HP 115

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *shortsword* +19 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 1d6+10 piercing

Melee ♦ *dagger* +18 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+9 piercing

Ranged ♦ *shortbow* +18 (deadly d8, propulsive, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 1d6+9 piercing

Double Shot ♦ The ranger makes two shortbow Strikes targeting two different creatures within the shortbow's first range increment. Both Strikes use the ranger's current multiple attack penalty, but each strike takes a -2 penalty.

Quick Draw ♦ The ranger draws a weapon, then Strikes with that weapon.

KNIGHT RECLAIMANT

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON MEDIUM HUMANOID

Perception +16

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +12, Gravelands Lore +16, Nature +12, Medicine +12, Religion +14, Stealth +14, Survival +14

Str +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

Items +1 striking *bastard sword*, half plate, steel shield (Hardness 5, 20 HP, BT 10)

AC 27; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +14, **Will** +16

Chernasardo Ranger



HP 135

Deep Resilience The knight reclaimant's convictions steel their mind against outside influences and help their allies remain strong. The knight and their allies within 30 feet have a +1 circumstance bonus to saves against mental effects, which increases to +2 against mental effects originating from undead.

Shield Block  (Pathfinder Monster Core 360)

Speed 25 feet

Melee  *bastard sword* +20 (magical, two-hand 2d12), **Damage** 2d8+10 slashing

Sudden Charge  **Frequency** once per turn; **Effect** The knight Strides twice. If they end their movement within melee reach of at least one enemy, the knight can make a melee Strike against that enemy.

PRIEST OF IOMEDAE

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON MEDIUM HUMANOID

Perception +15

Languages Common

Skills Diplomacy +13, Intimidation +15, Iomedae Lore +17, Medicine +16, Religion +17, Society +12, Survival +12

Str +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +3

Items dagger, +1 *longsword*, religious symbol of Iomedae

AC 24; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +13, **Will** +18

HP 110

Speed 25 feet

Melee  *longsword* +16 (magical, versatile P), **Damage** 1d8+9 slashing

Melee  dagger +15 (agile, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+8 piercing

Ranged  dagger +15 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+8 piercing

Divine Prepared Spells DC 25, attack +17; **3rd** *crisis of faith*, *heal* (×3), *heroism*, *holy light*; **2nd** *enlarge*, *dispel magic*, *see the unseen*; **1st** *alarm*, *infuse vitality*, *sure strike*; **Cantrips** (3rd) *detect magic*, *divine lance*, *guidance*, *light*, *shield*

Cleric Domain Spells 1 Focus Point, DC 25; **1st** *weapon surge* (Pathfinder Player Core 381)

Divine Rituals DC 25; *consecrate*

Healing Hands When the priest casts *heal*, they roll d10s instead of d8s.

Steady Spellcasting If another creature's reaction would disrupt the priest's spellcasting action, the priest attempts a DC 15 flat check. If the priest succeeds, their action isn't disrupted.

INFILTRATING FORT OZEM

"Ashes for Ozem" is, at its core, a heist. The PCs must infiltrate Fort Ozem, locate the *Chalice of Ozem*, and escape with the artifact, leaving destruction in their wake. While combat within the fort is likely, make it clear to the players that a full-frontal assault of Fort Ozem is not the characters' best option. If Seldeg's information is correct, the fort's defenders outnumber the characters by a healthy margin, and revealing themselves too early risks the chalice slipping from their grasp. Instead, the PCs should

avoid direct confrontation, disposing enemies quickly and quietly when necessary until the chalice is secured. While the PCs have several hours to prepare for their mission, the actual infiltration of the fort takes place in encounter, rather than exploration, mode.

Awareness

The Chernasardo Rangers, under the command of Arsiella Dei, use the ruins of Fort Ozem as a base of operations in the Southern Fangwood. They share the site with priests from the church of Iomedae, who maintain a shrine to the goddess at the location, as well as with the Knights of Lastwall. As the PCs infiltrate Fort Ozem, their activities might alert Arsiella or those under her command.

The awareness of Fort Ozem's defenders is measured in Awareness Points (AP). As the PCs gain AP, the dangers they face from the fort's defenders increases. The Development sections of many areas inside the fort describe ways the characters might gain AP. In addition, each time the characters engage in combat within Fort Ozem, they gain 2 AP. If the characters make efforts to finish the combat quickly and quietly (and if they discretely dispose any evidence they leave behind), they might instead gain only 1 AP. Similarly, particularly loud or extended combats might earn the characters 3 AP or more. At the GM's discretion, the characters' total AP might decrease if they go several hours without gaining AP; however, once the party's AP reaches 4, it can't decrease below that threshold for at least 12 hours (beyond the time frame Seldeg Bhedlis has given the characters for their mission).

The characters' total number of Awareness Points has the following effects.

- 4 Awareness Points:** The Chernasardo Ranger in the Bell Room (area **A14**) rings a small bell four times. Fort Ozem's defenders continue their normal behavior but begin moving in pairs. *Iomedae's Flame* (in area **A8**) continues to glow white.
- 8 Awareness Points:** The large bell in area **A14** is sounded, followed by three smaller bells. The bells signal the fort's defenders to increase patrols, triggering **Event 2: Wandering Defenders**. *Iomedae's Flame* glows yellow.
- 12 Awareness Points:** All defenders relocate to the stronghold portion of the fort. *Iomedae's Flame* glows blue.
- 16 Awareness Points:** The large bell rings twice, followed by two smaller bells. The fort's defenders initiate a room-to-room search, triggering **Event 3: Who Goes There?**. *Iomedae's Flame* glows red.
- 21 Awareness Points:** All bells chime six times in a row. Arsiella Dei enters the catacombs and retrieves the *Chalice of Ozem* from **B9**. Once the chalice is secured, she evacuates the fort through the secret exit in area **A15** or the hidden tunnels in area **B8**. The PCs have one last chance to stop her in **Event 4: A Quick Retreat**. Meanwhile, the remainder of the fort's defenders abandon the site through the front gates (area **A1**). *Iomedae's Flame* glows red.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX

FORT OZEM GROUND LEVEL
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



Event 2: Wandering Defenders Moderate 7

When the characters gain 8 AP, the defenders at Fort Ozem increase their patrols. Shortly after the PCs trigger this event, two Chernasardo Rangers approach the party's location. At this point, the defenders don't expect to find intruders inside the fort, and the characters can still avoid notice if they are wary. This encounter can take place anywhere you think would make most sense based on the characters' actions thus far in the adventure.

Each character can avoid the rangers by succeeding at a DC 28 Stealth check to Hide. The fort's defenders are few enough that attempts to use Deception to Lie or Impersonate one of their number most likely fail automatically, although you might allow the PCs to attempt a check, particularly if they use magic to enhance their efforts.

CHERNASARDO RANGERS (2)

CREATURE 7

Page 44

Initiative Perception +18

Development: If the characters engage in combat with the rangers, the rangers immediately raise an alarm, possibly drawing other defenders into the encounter. As normal with any combat encounter within Fort Ozem, the fight causes the characters to gain at least 1 AP, depending on how swiftly they can subdue the rangers.

Event 3: Who Goes There? Severe 7

When the party reaches 16 AP, Arsiella Dei orders a room-to-room search of the entire fort. Shortly thereafter, the characters are spotted by a pair of Chernasardo Rangers lead by a priest of Iomedae. Unless the characters are using magic or some other method to conceal their presence, combat with the defenders is inevitable.

CHERNASARDO RANGERS (2)

CREATURE 7

Page 44

Initiative Perception +18

PRIEST OF IOMEDAE

CREATURE 7

Page 45

Initiative Perception +15

Development: As combat with the priest and rangers begins, they immediately raise an alarm, possibly drawing other defenders into the encounter. As normal with any combat encounter within Fort Ozem, the fight causes the characters to gain at least 1 AP, depending on how swiftly they can subdue the defenders.

Event 4: A Quick Retreat Severe 7

When the party gains 21 AP or more, Arsiella Dei determines that the fort has been breached by an overwhelming force,



putting the *Chalice of Ozem* in danger. The bells in the Bell Room (area A14) ring six times, signaling a full-scale evacuation of the fort.

Any remaining defenders retreat either through the fort's front gate (area A1) or the hidden tunnels in the catacombs (area B8). The evacuation takes roughly 20 minutes, during which time Arsiella retrieves the *Chalice* from area B9 and abandons the fort.

The characters have one last chance to stop Arsiella before she retreats with the *Chalice of Ozem*.

This encounter should take place wherever you think would make sense based on the party's current location.

For example, if the characters have yet to discover the catacombs, they might encounter Arsiella as she leaves the stronghold section of the fort through the secret exit in area A15. Depending on the characters' actions thus far in the adventure, one or more of the fort's other defenders might accompany Arsiella. However, keep in mind that the presence of additional defenders raises the difficulty of the final encounter with Arsiella to extreme or beyond.

ARSIELLA DEI

CREATURE 9

Page 122

Initiative Perception +21

Development: If the PCs haven't encountered Arsiella and recovered the *Chalice* at the end of 20 minutes, Arsiella escapes and flees into the Southern Fangwood. The PCs fail their mission and must return to Seldeg Bhedlis empty-handed.

BREACHING THE WALLS

The most obvious entrance to Fort Ozem is through the structure's gates in its outer wall (area A1). The fort's original gates rotted away long ago, and visitors can enter the stronghold simply by walking through the space left behind. However, it's likely the PCs will want to avoid a direct approach and enter the fort by going over (or through) the fort's outer walls.

Walls: Fort Ozem's walls are 3 feet thick, 20 feet high, and are constructed from blocks of cut stone (Hardness 14, 56 HP, BT 28). Vines and moss have overgrown the walls, but the vegetation is particularly thick around the fort's southern "waist" (see Hazards, page 48). The vines and other handholds in the crumbling stone make scaling the walls relatively simple (Climb DC 20).

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX



Hazards: The vines near the fort's waist are particularly thick. In addition, the Chernasardo Rangers have planted a deadly vine called snake's mane in that area. The spaces containing secret entrances (see Impossible Doors below) are clear of snake's mane.

Snake's Mane

Hazard 7

Environmental

Stealth DC 27 (trained) to discern the snake's mane from the surrounding vegetation

Description A tangle of feathery green vines appears innocuous but fires a spray of acidic barbs at anything that disturbs it.

Disable DC 27 Nature (expert) to strip the barbs from the vines, rendering them harmless, or DC 30 Stealth (trained) to move through the snake's mane without disturbing it

AC 22; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +0

Hardness 0; **HP** 60; **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** fire 10, slashing 10

Barb Spray  **Trigger** A creature enters an area containing snake's mane or the snake's mane takes damage; **Effect** The vine sprays a hail of acidic barbs in a 10-foot emanation. Any creature in the area takes 4d10+18 acid damage. On a critical failure, the creature is also blinded for 1 minute.

Reset 1 hour, as the vine grows a new set of barbs

Impossible Doors: Two secret entrances, located on the western and eastern sides of the fort, pierce the fort's walls. The PCs can locate the entrances by succeeding at a DC 23 Perception check to Search. (If the PCs successfully shadowed the rangers from **Event 1** to the fort, they might be aware of the doors already.) Each entrance consists of a wooden door with no visible lock, knob, or other opening mechanism. The doors are covered with vines, but if the characters clear away the vegetation, they discover the words "Odra San Reh" carved into the door's surface.

The doors are sealed by magic. Speaking aloud the words Odra San Reh ("Chernasardo" backwards) causes the door to open for 1 minute, at which point the door closes again. A door can be Forced Open with a successful DC 27 Athletics check. The magic that seals each door can also be counteracted (4th rank; counteract DC 24).

Development: For each PC who fails a check to Climb the walls surrounding Fort Ozem, the party gains 1 AP. The characters also gain 1 AP if they trigger the snake's mane hazard or Force Open the impossible doors.

A1. Healing Hedges

Moderate 7

The grounds before Fort Ozem's front gates are surrounded by a wall of overgrown hedges, creating a solid barrier with only a single narrow path leading to the fort's entrance.

The fort's defenders consider the path to the front gates a place of quiet contemplation, but undead and other intruders find the approach less welcoming.

Spell-Touched Terrain: The path is an area of spell-touched terrain (*Pathfinder Secrets of Magic* 221) that casts *field of life* whenever a creature steps onto it. Once activated, the effect encompasses the entire path between the hedges and the southern doors of the ruined keep (area A3). The effect lasts for 1 minute. Until the effect ends, any living creature that starts its turn in the area regains 1d8 Hit Points, and any undead creature that starts its turn in the area takes 1d8 vitality damage. The effect resets after 1 hour, so PCs who exit Fort Ozem through the front gates might encounter the spell-touched terrain a second time.

Hazards: Undead PCs can avoid the spell-touched terrain by hacking through the hedges, which are greater difficult terrain. However, the Chernasardo Rangers have seeded the area with traps designed to frustrate intruders. They've set three snares, affectionately dubbed "Chernasardo chompers," throughout the hedges. In addition, stands of snake's mane grow in the areas where the hedges meet Fort Ozem's walls. These are marked with "T" on the map.

Chernasardo Chompers (3)

Hazard 7

Uncommon Mechanical Snare Trap

Stealth DC 27 (trained) to spot the snare

Description These animal snares have been repurposed to discourage unwanted intruders. When a creature steps onto the snare, jaws with sharpened teeth close around the creature's leg.

Disable DC 26 Acrobatics (trained) to step clear the snare before it springs, or DC 22 Thievery (trained) to trigger the trap harmlessly

AC 24; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +0

Hardness 15; **HP** 60 (BT 30); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Bite  **Trigger** A creature moves into the space containing the trap; **Effect** The trap's jaws snap shut on the creature's leg, dealing 4d8+14 piercing damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save). On a failure, the creature becomes caught in the trap and is immobilized (Escape DC 22).

Snake's Mane

Hazard 7

See above

Stealth DC 27 (trained)

Development: The PCs gain 1 AP for each hazard they trigger, not including the spell-touched terrain, to a maximum of 5 AP if they trigger all hazards.

A2. Sculpture Garden

Moderate 7

Vines blooming with tiny pink flowers carpet the grounds of this narrow courtyard. Here and there, the vines tangle into shapes that vaguely resemble common objects, including a wheelbarrow, a rain barrel, and what appears to be a cannon.

A character who succeeds at a DC 25 Nature check to Recall Knowledge identifies the distinctive vine shapes as the creations of stelemoras, nature-loving fey who transform inanimate objects and living creatures alike into sculptures made from flowering vines. Arsiella Dei gave the stelemoras this plot of land with the promise of new and interesting objects to transform. In return, the fey agreed not to attack the rangers or their allies.

Creatures: There are currently two stelemoras in the courtyard, one on either side of the path. If the PCs happen to carry an object of 4 Bulk or more (such as a tower shield), the stelemoras offer safe passage through the courtyard in return for the object. Otherwise, the stelemoras remain motionless (using their Tangle of Vines ability) until a character either leaves the path or approaches the entrance to the ruined keep (area A3). They then attack, using Stealth for initiative.

STELEMORAS (2)

CREATURE 7

Page 120

Initiative Stealth +18

Treasure: If PCs defeat the stelemoras, the vines throughout the garden wither and die, revealing the objects beneath them. On the west side of the garden, the items include a *spellguard shield*. Along the east side of the path lies a marble bust of one of Molthune's general lords (worth 400 gp).

THE RUINED KEEP

The roof of the building near the front of Fort Ozem rises almost as high as the walls that surround it, but its once-impressive facade lies in ruins. Large sections of the stone have crumbled away, allowing vines and other greenery to invade the cracks left behind.

The ruined keep at the front of Fort Ozem has the following general features. If a PC attempts a challenging task not detailed here, assign it a difficulty of DC 23.

Ceilings: The keep's ceilings are 15 feet high. Sections of the roof have collapsed into the keep below.

Doors: The keep's exterior doors are made from reinforced wood (Hardness 15, 60 HP, BT 30). Interior doors have been weakened by termites (Hardness 5, 20 HP, BT 10). None of the doors are locked.

Lighting: There are no light sources inside the keep, but during the day light streams in through gaps in the roof, providing dim light throughout the structure. At night, the interior of the keep is filled with darkness.

Roof: Time has weakened the roof of the ruined keep. The first time a creature ends its turn on the roof, that creature must attempt a DC 23 Acrobatics check. On a failed check, the roof beneath them gives way, dropping them 15 feet into the room below, unless they Grab an Edge. The PCs gain 1 AP if a character falls in this way.

A PC who peers through a section of the collapsed roof can learn more about the room beneath it.

Walls: The keep's walls are made of crumbling masonry and are relatively easy to climb (Climb DC 15).

A3. Entry Hall

A spiderweb of cracks covers the ceiling of this empty hall, particularly near where the hall narrows in the middle. Though the PCs might be concerned about a collapse, the hall remains structurally sound, as a PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Crafting check can determine.

A4. The Path of Doors

Moderate 7

Three pairs of identical doors block the party's way through these four interconnected chambers. The skeletal remains of a previous intruder lie before the final pair of doors.

Hazards: Moving counterclockwise through the chambers, the eastern door of the first pair of doors (area A4a) is warded with an electrified entrance trap. Both doors of the second pair (area A4b) are safe, but the northern door leads to a passage filled with a weight of guilt haunt. The final two doors (area A4c) are both secured with a good lock (DC 30, five successes). Furthermore, the far western door is warded with a thieves' lament trap. Area A4d is unremarkable.

ELECTRIFIED ENTRANCE

HAZARD 7

UNCOMMON MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 24 (trained) to spot the runes etched into the door's frame

Description Magical runes electrocute anyone who crosses the door's threshold.

Disable DC 26 Acrobatics (trained) to jump through the door before the runes trigger, DC 28 Thievery (expert) to scratch out the runes, or *dispel magic* (4th rank; counteract DC 24) to counteract the runes

AC 22; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +12

Hardness 14; **HP** 58 (BT 26); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Sizzle ⚡ **Trigger** A creature moves through the doorway; **Effect** Arcs of lightning flash across the threshold. The triggering creature takes 4d8+18 electricity damage (DC 23 basic Reflex save). On a failure, the creature is also dazzled for 1 minute. On a critical failure, the creature is blinded for 1 minute and then dazzled for an additional minute.

Reset 1 minute

WEIGHT OF GUILT

HAZARD 7

Pathfinder Book of the Dead 66

Stealth DC 30 (expert)

THIEVES' LAMENT

HAZARD 7

UNCOMMON MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 27 (trained) to spot the rune inside the lock

Description A rune inscribed on the inside of the lock releases a burst of flame that burns the thief's hands and their tools.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX



Disable DC 30 Thievery (expert) to scratch out the rune, or *dispel magic* (4th rank; counteract DC 24) to counteract the runes
AC 22; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +17

Hardness 14; **HP** 58 (BT 36); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Flash Flame  **Trigger** A creature attempts to Pick the Lock or fails to Disable the Device; **Effect** The rune triggers, releasing a burst of flame from the lock. The triggering creature must attempt a DC 25 Reflex saving throw.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 2d10+9 fire damage.

Failure The creature takes 4d10+18 fire damage and their fingers are burned, imposing a -1 circumstance penalty to Thievery checks for 1 hour.

Critical Failure As failure, and the creature's thieves' toolkit is broken.

Treasure: A character who Searches the area around the skeleton and succeeds at a DC 23 Perception check discovers the charred remains of a thieves' toolkit nearby. One of the thief's pockets contains a *madcap top*, as well as a folded sketch of the *Chalice of Ozem*. The sketch grants the PCs a +1 item bonus checks made to identify the *Chalice* (including discerning the forgery in area A20).

Development: The PCs gain 1 AP for each hazard they trigger, to a maximum of 3 AP if they trigger all three hazards.

A5. Heart of Stone

Low 7

In stark contrast to the rest of the building, this chamber appears to be in good condition. The area is devoid of rubble or even dust, as if the floors were recently swept clean.

The chamber is home to a group of three tallusians who have taken the room under their protection.

Creatures: As she did with the stelemoras (area A2), Arsiella encouraged the celestials to protect the keep as an extra line of defense against intruders. They see the PCs as a threat to their home and attack on sight.

TALLUSIANS (3)

CREATURE 5

Page 121

Initiative Perception +12

A6. Ruined Storeroom

Moderate 7

A ceiling collapse has smashed the shelves that once filled this space, scattering wood, broken glass, and other debris throughout the room. The contents of the shelves have leaked onto the floor, covering the stone with an emerald-colored, tar-like substance.

The areas filled with broken shelves and rubble are difficult terrain. The tar-like substance is harmless

but extremely sticky. A creature that steps into the tar takes a -10-foot circumstance penalty to its Speed for 1 minute or until it uses an Interact action to scrape the substance clean. Creatures who use the broken shelves as an impromptu bridge can avoid the tar easily enough.

Treasure: A character that Searches the rubble can attempt a DC 23 Perception check. On a success, they discover three vials of greater alchemist's fire, miraculously intact despite the ceiling's collapse.

A7. Inner Courtyard

Severe 7

A courtyard fills the space between the two buildings that make up Fort Ozem. The area is centered around a fountain, from which rises a marble statue of a woman clad in plate armor and wielding a sword and shield. An archery range has been set up directly to the fountain's south.

Characters trained in Religion immediately recognize the fountain's statue as a representation of Iomedae. Fresh water pours from spouts at the goddess's feet, another indication the fort isn't as abandoned as it appears from the outside.

Creatures: If the PCs have gained less than 12 AP, when they arrive, two Chernasardo Rangers are here shooting at the archery targets. A third ranger walks the perimeter of the northern building. Under normal circumstances, this ranger completes a circuit every 5 minutes or so, but if he hears sounds of combat, he rushes to investigate, arriving in 1d4 rounds. If the PCs have gained 12 AP or more, one of the rangers stands alert in front of the door to area A8, while the other two circle the building.

CHERNASARDO RANGERS (3)

CREATURE 7

Page 44

Initiative Perception +18

Treasure: Visitors to Fort Ozem sometimes toss coins into the fountain to honor Iomedae. If the PCs spend 10 minutes to gather them, they can collect a total of 250 gp worth of gold and silver coins.

THE STRONGHOLD

Unlike the rundown structure to the south, this building is clearly well maintained, despite the creeping vines that cover its stone walls.

The stronghold that dominates the northern half of Fort Ozem has the following general features. If a PC attempts a challenging task not detailed here, assign it a difficulty of DC 24.

Ceilings: The stronghold's ceilings are 15 feet high.

Doors: The stronghold's exterior door is made of reinforced wood (Hardness 15, 60 HP, BT 30). The interior doors are wood (Hardness 10, 40 HP, BT 20). All

doors are fitted with good locks (DC 30, five successes). The fort's defenders each carry a key to their associated area, and Arsiella carries keys to all the doors.

Lighting: Gemstones glowing with *everlight* spells line the interior walls, providing bright light throughout the stronghold. Tampering with the gemstones gains the PCs 1 AP per gemstone.

Walls: The keep's walls are hewn stone (Climb DC 30). Interior walls are masonry (Climb DC 20).

Windows: Chambers with exterior walls feature narrow windows designed to let in fresh air and light. These windows are 10 feet off the ground and approximately 1 foot wide and 4 feet tall. A Medium or smaller creature can Squeeze through a window with a successful DC 25 Acrobatics check.

A8. Entrance Hall

Trivial 7

Four pillars support the ceiling of this antechamber. A mosaic on the floor between the pillars depicts a longsword in muted shades of beige and gray. A sunburst pattern in bright yellows radiates from the blade. At the sword's hilt, a bowl-like depression in the floor contains a flame burning without fuel. Doors are set into the southern, western, and eastern walls.

Hazard: The bowl in the center of the mosaic contains a magical fire called *Iomedae's Flame*. The flame burns continually, producing no heat but shedding bright light in a 10-foot radius. The flame's color and magical effects shift in response to the fort's alert status, as communicated to the flame by the bells in area A14. The flame can't be removed from the bowl, but the hazard can be counteracted normally.

IOMEDAE'S FLAME

HAZARD 9

UNCOMMON MAGICAL

Stealth DC 22 (expert)

Description A magical flame changes color in response to Fort Ozem's alert status, with a 10-foot radius.

Disable DC 30 Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion (expert) to snuff out the flame with opposing magic; each success reduces the flame's color one step (from red to blue, blue to yellow, and so on). A critical success reduces the flame's color two steps. A success while the flame is white permanently disables the hazard.

Flaring Flame **Trigger** A creature moves into the radius of the flame's light or starts its turn in the radius; **Effect** *Iomedae's Flame* flares, producing an effect determined by the flame's current color. Followers of Iomedae treat the result of all saving throws against the flame's effects as one step better. The effects are cumulative; a creature that enters the radius of the red flame also triggers the effect of the white, yellow, and blue flames.

White Flame The flame casts *revealing light* (DC 28).

Yellow Flame The flame casts *fear* (DC 28) on each creature in the light's radius.

Blue Flame The flame flickers as winds buffet creatures in the area. Any creature in the flame's light takes 8d4 bludgeoning damage (DC 28 basic Reflex save). This damage has the nonlethal trait against living creatures.

Red Flame The flame releases a sudden pulse of intense heat. Any creature in the flame's light takes 4d6 fire damage and 4d6 spirit damage (DC 28 basic Fortitude save). This damage has the holy trait.

Reset The hazard resets automatically each round. After 1 hour, the flame reverts to its default status of a white flame.

Development: If the characters successfully disable *Iomedae's Flame*, one of the fort's defenders discovers the sabotage 1d10 minutes later. The PCs gain 12 AP as soon as their sabotage is discovered.

A9. Storage Room

This narrow room is packed with wooden crates several layers deep. Each crate has been tagged with a slip of paper marked with a specific numeral.

The numbers marking each crate indicate that crate's contents, using the 11 Acts of Iomedae as a key. The characters can attempt a DC 25 Religion or Society check to Decipher the Writing. If they have a copy of the *Acts of Iomedae*, they gain a +2 circumstance bonus to this check. Characters with a decoded copy of the *Fort Ozem Command Guide* (like the one in area A17) automatically earn a critical success. Each attempt takes 10 minutes.

Critical Success The character fully deciphers the numbers on the labels. Most numbers refer to common items of no particular value, but two crates are designated as Confiscated and Special.

Success The PC deciphers the Confiscated label. On a second success, the PC deciphers the Special label.

Failure The PC fails to decipher any labels.

Treasure: The crate labeled Confiscated holds various Molthuni items, including a set of crystals worth 200 gp. The box labeled Special contains a solid gold statuette of Iomedae worth 600 gp. Finding either crate without deciphering the coding system requires an hour of work.

Development: If the PCs open any of the crates, they gain 2 AP, unless one of them succeeds at a DC 23 Crafting or DC 25 Stealth check to conceal their work.

A10. Ranger Barracks

This communal sleeping room appears to be designed for utility over comfort. The one-person beds are little more than cots, with few personal touches to distinguish them. Doors in the north, west, and east walls lead out of the room.

Treasure: Folded neatly beneath the pillow of the southwestern cot is a *cloak of illusions*. Beneath the

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX



northeastern cot is a pack of traveling supplies, including a copy of the popular mystery novel *Cold Snap*.

Development: The PCs gain 1 AP if they take either the cloak or the traveling pack. If the PCs have earned 12 AP or less, the door to the east is slightly ajar. The door's hinges squeak loudly (alerting the rangers in area A11) unless the characters silence the hinges before opening the door. Every hour or so, one of the rangers from area A11 passes through this area on the way to the kitchen (area A13) to grab a snack.

A11. Game Room

Severe 7

A table surrounded by four chairs occupies the center of this chamber. Stacks of coins and hands of playing cards clutter the table's surface. A cloak has been draped over the back of one of the chairs.

Creatures: If the PCs have gained less than 12 AP, three Chernasardo Rangers sit at the table playing golem, a card game similar to five-card draw poker. Every hour or so, one of the rangers heads to the fort's kitchen (area A13) in search of a snack. If the PCs have 12 AP or more, the three rangers are patrolling the stronghold instead, having left their coins, cards, and cloak behind.

CHERNASARDO RANGERS (3)

CREATURE 7

Page 44

Initiative Perception +18

Treasure: There is a total of 200 gp worth of coins on the table, but the PCs must succeed at a DC 20 Thievery check to remove more than 20 gp without making a noticeable change in the size of the piles. If the rangers notice any missing coins, the PCs gain 1 AP. Inside the cloak's pocket is a slip of paper with instructions for visiting the fort's catacombs, which identify the catacombs' entrance as Iomedae's Rest (area A20).

A12. Dining Hall

This oddly shaped hall is filled with mismatched tables and chairs. Some of the furniture is richly appointed and would look very much at home in a Molthuni estate, while others are simple, hand-carved pieces. The smell of food wafts from a door in the eastern arm of the room.

This mess hall is highly trafficked, with various defenders coming and going throughout the day. Every hour or so, one of the Chernasardo Rangers from area A11 passes through on the way to the kitchen (area A13) to grab a snack. Althis, a priest of Iomedae who fancies himself a chef, enters the room twice an hour as he takes a break from his work in the kitchen.

Development: Unless they make efforts to cover their tracks, PCs who leave evidence of violence here gain 1 AP.

A13. Kitchen

Trivial 7

Wood and stone-topped tables support a variety of pots, pans, and other cooking utensils. A rack above the southeast table holds jars filled with spices and crushed herbs. An iron kettle simmers above a cooking fire on the eastern wall.

Creature: Althis, a priest of Iomedae who serves as Fort Ozem's unofficial cook, is often found in the kitchen wearing a white cassock covered in food stains both old and new. Unless the fort is on alert, he is preoccupied with perfecting his stew (see Treasure below), often turning his back on the kitchen's door to gather ingredients from the rack on the southern wall.

ALTHIS

CREATURE 7

Variant priest of Iomedae, page 45

Initiative Perception +15

Skills Cooking Lore +13

Treasure: The stew simmering above the cooking fire is a batch of *Lastwall soup* (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Character Guide* 92). Althis's stock of ingredients include a collection of rare herbs found only in the Southern Fangwood. These herbs can be sold to an herbalist or chef for 50 gp. Among the jars is a bottle filled with murky liquid and what appears to be a worm floating at the bottom: a *worm vial* (*Pathfinder Treasure Vault* 57).

Development: Althis regularly samples the stew, as do the rangers from area A11. Fast-acting poisons added to the stew might neutralize those defenders without the need for combat. If the characters disturb the stew or any of the other cooking supplies, the PCs gain 1 AP unless they succeed at a DC 25 Cooking Lore or Stealth check to conceal their actions.

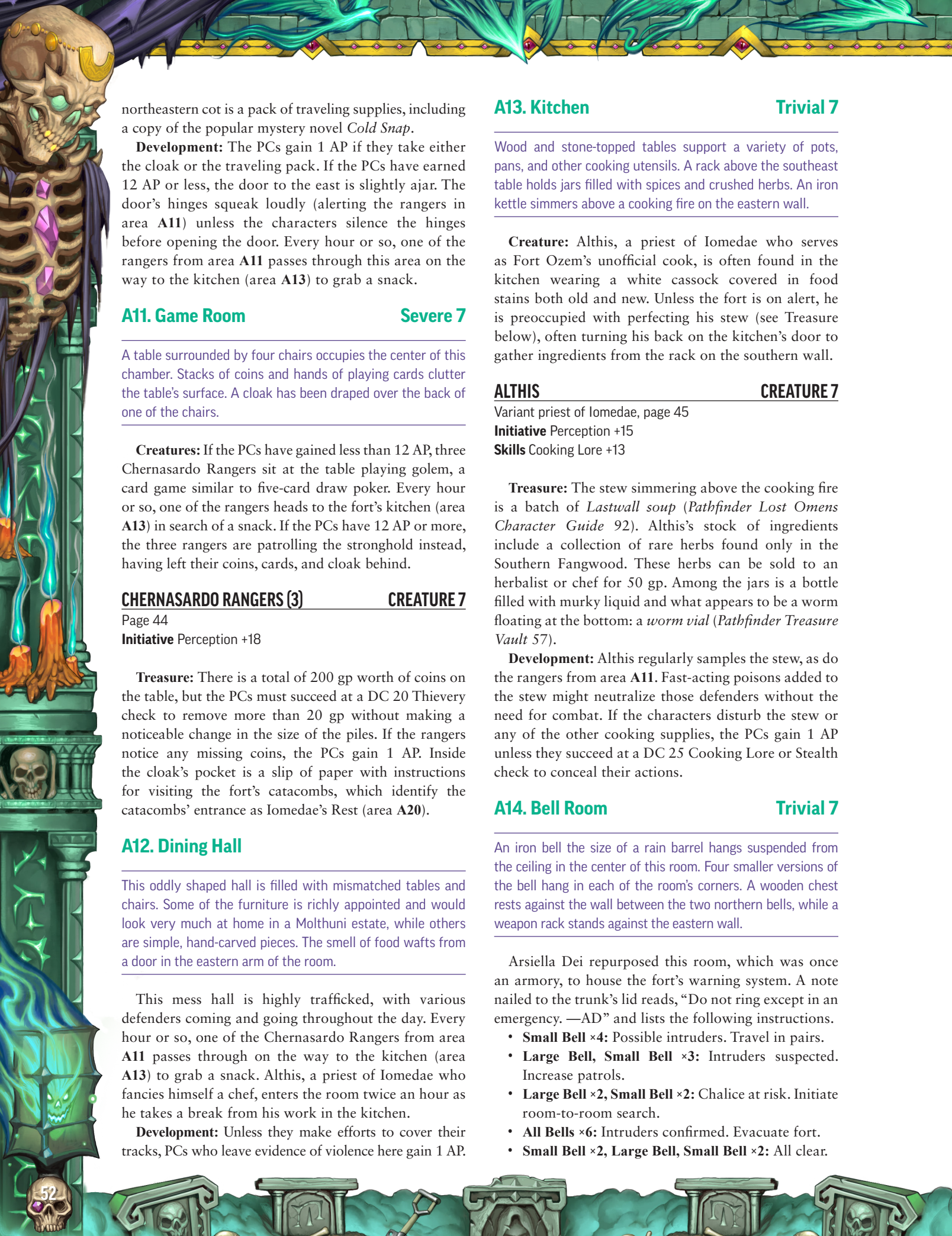
A14. Bell Room

Trivial 7

An iron bell the size of a rain barrel hangs suspended from the ceiling in the center of this room. Four smaller versions of the bell hang in each of the room's corners. A wooden chest rests against the wall between the two northern bells, while a weapon rack stands against the eastern wall.

Arsiella Dei repurposed this room, which was once an armory, to house the fort's warning system. A note nailed to the trunk's lid reads, "Do not ring except in an emergency. —AD" and lists the following instructions.

- **Small Bell ×4:** Possible intruders. Travel in pairs.
- **Large Bell, Small Bell ×3:** Intruders suspected. Increase patrols.
- **Large Bell ×2, Small Bell ×2:** Chalice at risk. Initiate room-to-room search.
- **All Bells ×6:** Intruders confirmed. Evacuate fort.
- **Small Bell ×2, Large Bell, Small Bell ×2:** All clear.



If the bells are rung as instructed, the fort's defenders change their behavior accordingly.

Creatures: A Chernasardo Ranger is always stationed here. If the PCs have fewer than 12 AP, the ranger is bored and whistles to himself while waiting for a signal to ring the bells. A PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check hears the whistling before opening the door to the room. Once the PCs gain 12 AP, a knight reclaimant accompanies the ranger, and both are on high alert.

CHERNASARDO RANGER CREATURE 7

Page 44

Initiative Perception +18

Treasure: The weapons rack holds a longsword, a +1 *composite shortbow* with 20 arrows, and a +2 *striking dagger*. The chest is secured with a good lock (DC 30, five successes) and contains 8 vials of *holy water*.

Development: Arsiella has ordered the fort's defenders to attend the bells at all times. If the PCs defeat the defenders in this room, they gain 4 AP. They gain an additional 2 AP if they take the items from the weapon rack or the chest. The first time the PCs ring the bells to give the "all clear" signal, reduce their total AP by half, provided they don't have 16 AP or more.

A15. Medic Station

Trivial 7

Two stretchers sit along the northern wall, while a desk and cabinet stand to the south.

This room serves as a triage center for fort defenders wounded in the line of duty. (Defenders who fall ill or are otherwise in need of ongoing care are housed in the southern half of area A16.) The desk is covered in notes written by the resident healer Shevarna, a human priest of Iomedae. Most of the notes detail the minor ailments of the fort's defenders, but one suggests that food is being left out too long in the kitchen (area A13), increasing the chance of food-borne illness.

Secret Door: A character who Searches the room and succeeds at a DC 23 Perception check notices that the wall between the desk and cabinet doesn't match the surrounding stone. Pressing a nearby flagstone causes that section of wall to slide to one side. The door operates only from this side and requires a DC 28 Perception to notice from the outside. Both Shevarna and Arsiella Dei are aware of this secret door, and Arsiella might use the route to escape Fort Ozem with the *Chalice of Ozem*.

Creatures: Shevarna can be found in this room at most times, checking on supplies and making notes. Once an

hour, she visits area A16 to check on the ailing ranger sleeping there.

SHEVARNA

CREATURE 7

Variant priest of Iomedae, page 45

Initiative Perception +15

Skills Medicine +18

Treasure: The cabinet beside Shevarna's desk is secured with a good lock (DC 30, five successes). It contains an expanded healer's toolkit, a pair of *greater healer's gloves*, a vial of greater antidote, and three *moderate healing potions*. At the back of the cabinet, in vials stamped with a skull and crossbones symbol, are three poisons: blightburn resin, giant scorpion venom, and spider root.

Development: If the characters disturb Shevarna's notes or take any of her supplies, they gain 2 AP unless they succeed at a DC 25 Medicine or Stealth check to conceal their actions.



Althis

A16. R&R (Rest & Repair) Station Trivial 7

The north half of this area (area A16a) serves as a repair station. Worktables on opposite walls hold tools and various broken items, including cookware, a wooden shovel, and a shoe. An unlocked door separates the repair station from an infirmary to the south (area A16b).

Creatures: A Chernasardo Ranger sleeps on one of the cots in the infirmary. Unless the fort's alarm bells ring or the PCs make an unusual amount of noise, the ranger remains sleeping as the characters explore the area. If roused, the ranger is sickened 2 and slowed 1.

CHERNASARDO RANGER

CREATURE 7

Page 44

Initiative Perception +18

Treasure: Among the tools on the worktables is a superb repair kit and a *traveler's any-tool*.

Development: Every hour or so, Shevarna (area A15) visits the infirmary to check on the ailing ranger. If she notices anything amiss, the PCs gain 2 AP.

A17. Commander's Quarters

Moderate 7

This chamber is sparsely decorated, with a bed in the northeast corner and a roll-top desk pushed against the western wall. A trunk rests in the corner opposite the bed. Doors stand in the walls to the north and south.

This room is used as the private quarters of the fort's commanding officer. It currently belongs to Arsiella Dei.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

Desk: The top of the roll-top desk is secured with an average lock (DC 25, three successes). Inside are Arsiella's notes detailing the day-to-day operations of the fort. The information contained within the papers is typical for a facility of this size and includes supply requests, personnel records, and scouting reports of the surrounding area. A PC who Searches the desk and succeeds at a DC 23 Perception check discovers a hidden compartment built into the desk's interior. The compartment contains a leather-bound book titled *Fort Ozem Command Guide*. The guide is written in code but can be deciphered with a DC 28 Society check to Decipher Writing. If decoded, the book contains a description of the catacombs beneath the fort, including the location of their entrance in Iomedae's Rest (area A20) and the secret exit via the mosaic in the catacombs (area B8). In the book's margins, Arsiella has added a note that the pillars in the catacomb's entrance (area B1) need to be shored up, lest they collapse and bring much of the fort with them.

Creatures: If the PCs have gained 3 AP or fewer, they encounter Arsiella Dei here in her quarters. Otherwise, she patrols the fort on the lookout for intruders. If attacked, Arsiella's first concern is calling for reinforcements, which might arrive in the form of the priest of Iomedae in area A18, Shevarna in area A15, or the knight reclaimant in area A19. As reinforcements arrive, the combat with Arsiella quickly escalates to an extreme encounter. If she finds herself without reinforcements, Arsiella retreats instead, hoping to make her way to the catacombs and escape the fort with the *Chalice of Ozem*. However, she takes care not to lead intruders to the artifact, preferring to die in its defense rather than reveal its location.

ARSIELLA DEI

CREATURE 9

Page 122

Initiative Perception +21

Development: If the characters disturb anything in this room, Arsiella notices the intrusion and the PCs gain 4 AP, unless they succeed at a DC 31 Stealth check to conceal their actions.

Treasure: Once it is decoded, the PCs can use the command guide to help them decipher the numbering system in area A9. The trunk in the corner is unlocked and contains Arsiella's bedding and clothes, her personal copy of the *Acts of Iomedae*, and a small pouch filled with gems worth a total of 300 gp.

A18. Holy Barracks

Trivial 7

Simple curtains of white linen divide this space into three sections, each holding a single bed and a trunk. Doors to the south and east lead out of the room.

This room serves as the living quarters for the priests of Iomedae in permanent residence at Fort Ozem, including Althis (A13) and Shevarna (A15).

Creatures: Occasionally, Althis and Shevarna can be found sleeping here, but usually the room contains only a single priest of Iomedae, who prays quietly at the foot of the northernmost bed. When the PCs first enter, the priest is hidden behind the curtains that divide the room, allowing the characters to slip past him with a successful DC 25 Stealth check to Sneak.



Shevarna

PRIEST OF IOMEDAE

CREATURE 7

Page 45

Initiative Perception +15

Treasure: Each of the three trunks is secured with an average lock (DC 25, three successes). The trunks contain cassocks and other personal effects. One of the trunks also holds an illuminated copy of the *Acts of Iomedae* (worth 60 gp), while another contains a *lesser cloister robe* (*Pathfinder Treasure Vault* 148).

Development: If the characters open the trunks or otherwise disturb the room, they gain 2 AP unless they succeed at a DC 25 Stealth check to conceal their actions.

A19. Iomedae's Blades

Low 7

Unlike the rest of the fort, the walls of this passage are lined with wood paneling bearing the scars of numerous sword cuts. Stands along the wall hold both real and practice swords. Near the walkway's intersection is a small bench and table.

Creatures: One knight reclaimant is always in the walkway practicing sword forms. Each form takes 10 minutes to complete. Once finished, the knight moves to the bench to make notes on their progress and select a weapon for their next exercise. A character who succeeds at a DC 23 Society or DC 21 Warfare Lore check recognizes the current sword form well enough to know when the knight's back will be turned, allowing the characters an opportunity to Sneak past the knight.

KNIGHT RECLAIMANT

CREATURE 8

Page 44

Initiative Perception +16

Development: The stands hold several blades of various design, although none of the weapons are magical. A battered copy of the *Acts of Iomedae* rests on the table alongside the knight's practice journal. If the PCs take the journal (or a significant number of the swords), they gain 1 AP.

A20. Iomedae's Rest

A bed fitted with immaculate white sheets occupies the center of this room. In the corner, a set of silver plate mail stands beside a long table along the western wall. Atop the table rests an ornate chalice and a gleaming longsword. A length of velvet rope blocks the entrance to the room. Dangling from the rope is a sign that reads "As Iomedae left it."

Iomedae herself used this chamber as her bedroom when she briefly commanded Fort Ozem during her mortal life. Today, the priests of Iomedae maintain the space in what they believe to be the exact condition it was in when Iomedae occupied it.

Mosaic: Set into the floor beneath the bed is a mosaic depicting a longsword with quillons resembling a sunburst and a pommel shaped like a pair of hands. Characters who look beneath the bed automatically discover the mosaic; otherwise, noticing the mosaic requires a successful DC 24 Perception check to Search.

Characters who succeed at a DC 18 Religion check recognize the mosaic's image as Iomedae's sword, *Heart's Edge*. The sword looks identical to the one that rests on the table (see Treasure below). A character who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check to Search the mosaic notices a slight gap between the edge of the mosaic and floor. If the PCs use this handhold to lift the mosaic, they reveal a set of steps that descend to the catacombs beneath the fort (area B1).

Treasure: The longsword on the table resembles the one depicted in the mosaic. The chalice is silver and studded with rubies cut to resemble drops of blood. To all appearances, the chalice matches the description of the artifact Seldeg Bhedlis sent the PCs here to claim.

While the PCs might believe they've accomplished their mission, both the sword and chalice are high-class forgeries. The items are each enchanted with a 3rd-rank *disguise magic* spell that causes them to appear to have the aura of a 6th-level magic item. A caster using *detect magic* or *read aura* of 3rd rank or higher can disbelieve the illusion by succeeding at a DC 23 Religion check.

While finding a collector to purchase the replicas might prove difficult, the sword and chalice are worth 200 gp each to an interested buyer.

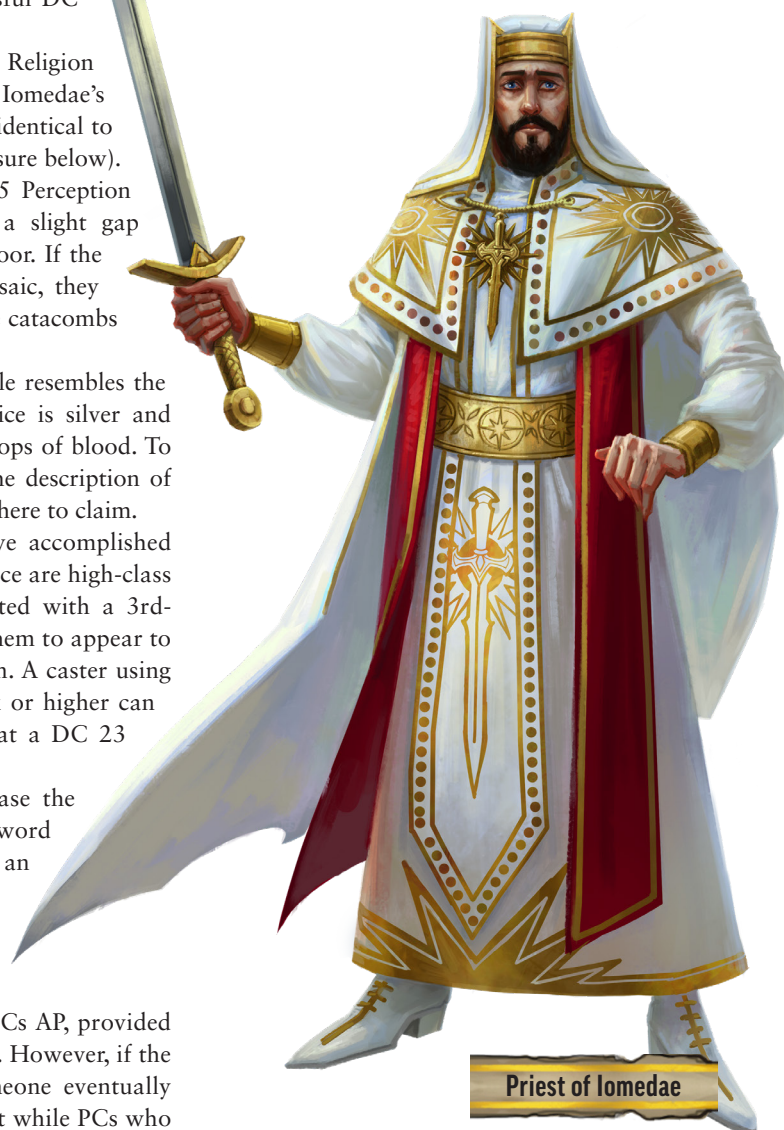
Development: The fort's defenders only occasionally enter this room, so disturbing any of the items in this room doesn't automatically gain the PCs AP, provided they've kept a low profile to this point. However, if the PCs have gained 8 AP or more, someone eventually comes to check on the room. Note that while PCs who

descend into the catacombs can shut the mosaic door behind them, they won't be able to return the bed to its original position—an anomaly the fort's defenders are sure to notice. Once the defenders notice that this room has been disturbed, the PCs' AP immediately increases to 21, triggering an evacuation of the fort.

THE CATACOMBS

The catacombs beneath Fort Ozem predate the fort, but they were repurposed by the Knights of Lastwall as a place to keep their honored dead. When Arsiella Dei became Fort Ozem's commander, she moved the remains of her father, Irgal Nirmath, to one of the deepest sections (area B7) and to this date visits him often. She also uses her time in the catacombs to keep an eye on the *Chalice of Ozem*, the artifact entrusted to her care. The chalice is in area B9.

The catacombs have the following general features. If a PC attempts a challenging task not described here, assign it a difficulty of DC 24.



Priest of Iomedae

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX

Ceilings: The ceilings throughout the catacombs are 8 feet high.

Doors: Doorless stone archways separate one area from the next.

Lighting: Gemstones glowing with *everlight* spells line the walls of the catacombs, but their magic has been muted to maintain an appropriately somber atmosphere. The gemstones shed dim light throughout the catacombs.

Treasure: Unknown to the fort's defenders, three mirmicettes recently took up residence in the catacombs. The mischievous fey are in the process of replacing grave goods throughout the area with forgeries, gathering the real treasures in their lair in area **B6**. Detecting a counterfeit item requires a successful a DC 25 Perception or Society check (increase the DC to 35 if a mirmicette is within 40 feet of the copy). If the PCs transport one of the mirmicette copies into a new area, the fey confront the party soon afterwards.

Walls: The walls are made of fitted stone and inset with niches for skeletal remains throughout.



B1-B3. Catacomb Crossroads

The stairs from the aboveground portion of the fort spiral down into a dark chamber with passages extending out in all directions. Five stone pillars that look as if they've seen better days support the chamber's low ceiling. Niches filled with skeletal remains line the walls.

Area **B1** connects the various sections of the catacombs, including two smaller burial chambers to the east (areas **B2** and **B3**).

Pillars: The pillars in this chamber provide support not only for the chamber's ceiling but also for the stronghold portion of Fort Ozem. Each pillar has Hardness 12, 40 HP (BT 20), and typical object immunities. If the PCs reduce three of the pillars below their broken threshold, the ceiling of this chamber collapses. A section of the stronghold above (starting at area **A20** and radiating outward from there) follows shortly thereafter, taking most of the catacombs with it. While this collapse doesn't destroy Fort Ozem entirely, the damage is sufficient to force the Chernasardo Rangers to abandon the location, fulfilling Seldeg Bhedlis's request to leave the fort in ruins.

Treasure: The burial niches in these three areas are stacked with skeletal remains and various grave goods. The PCs can Search the niches with 10 minutes of work per area. In area **B1**, they discover a silver religious symbol of Iomedae worth 60 gp. The niches in area **B2** contain a *skeleton key*, as well as a false mirmicette copy of a golden bracelet (apparently worth 100 gp). In area **B3**, the niches contain a *diplomat's badge*, a *wayfinder*, and a ruby necklace worth 200 gp, as well as a false mirmicette copy of a ruby bracelet (apparently worth 150 gp). The real versions of the copied items are found in area **B6**.

B4. Sacrificial Sanctum

A marble statue of an imposing knight with a breastplate, sword, and shield takes up the center of the chamber. Around the plinth on which the statue stands are a dozen or more gravestones, each marker rising from the floor as if the ground were dirt instead of stone.

A character who succeeds at a DC 25 Society check recognizes the statue as the Taldan general Arnisant, who commanded the forces of the Shining Crusade. The gravestones around the statue bear the names of some of the heroes who served under Arnisant, although the markers are purely symbolic and no bodies are interred beneath them. A plaque on the statue's plinth reads: "In honor of those whose sacrifice made our victory possible."

B5. Tomb of the Nameless

Low 7

Tiles of flawless black granite cover the walls, floor, and ceiling of this otherwise empty room. Across the expanse,

words can be seen chiseled into the western wall, but they are illegible from the chamber's entrance.

The Knights of Ozem set aside this chamber to honor those who died unrecognized in the crusade against Tar-Baphon. The words on the western wall read: "For those who sacrificed their names to defeat the Whispering Way. Speak their names (and no others) to find yourself."

Hazard: The first character to step into the room triggers a haunt.

NAMES OF THE NAMELESS

HAZARD 8

UNCOMMON COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth DC +16 (trained) to hear whispering voices

Description The voices of the nameless dead intrude into the minds of the living.

Disable DC 26 Perception to discern a name spoken by the nameless dead, or DC 28 Religion (expert) to put the nameless dead to rest. Speaking three names aloud disables the haunt. A creature that speaks any other name aloud must succeed at a DC 28 Will save or be confused for 1 round.

Disappearing Door  (illusion, mental) **Trigger** A creature enters the room; **Effect** An illusory wall appears across the room's entrance. A creature who succeeds at DC 30 Perception check disbelieves the illusion, allowing them to leave the area. The haunt then rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action; auditory, divine, emotion, fear, mental) Spirits of the dead whisper their names into the minds of creatures in the room, dealing 2d10+11 mental damage (DC 28 basic Will save). A creature that fails the save is also frightened 1 (or frightened 2 on a critical failure).

Reset If the haunt is disabled, divine light washes through the area. Living creatures in the area regain 4d8 Hit Points, and undead creatures in the area take 4d8 vitality damage. The haunt deactivates 1 minute after all creatures leave the area but resets immediately thereafter.

B6. Watery Grave

Moderate 7

The air in this chamber is cool and damp with moisture. Puddles of dark water cover the floor, pooling near the room's western end, where the statue of a knight kneels atop a plinth. The knight raises a shield studded with arrows before him.

Failing Wall: A PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Crafting, Survival, or appropriate Lore check can identify the source of the water as a crack in the east wall of the chamber. The wall has Hardness 10, 40 HP (BT 20), and typical object immunities. If the wall is reduced to below its Broken Threshold, the trickle of water turns into a torrent that threatens to flood the fort. Water begins to spill into the catacombs at the rate of 1 foot every 10 minutes. After 1 hour, the catacombs flood completely. Shortly thereafter, the damage to the fort's foundation becomes irreparable and the entirety of Fort Ozem collapses in on itself.

Creatures: The three mirmicettes that have invaded Fort Ozem's catacombs gather the grave goods they have stolen in this room. Unless the PCs encounter the mirmicettes elsewhere in the catacombs, they find the fey here sorting through their treasure. The mirmicettes are familiar with the rough layout of the catacombs and are willing to share what they know, unless the PCs try to take their treasure or visibly carry anything the mirmicettes have copied. In this case, the mirmicettes attack. The mirmicettes also attack if the characters possess the *Chalice of Ozem* (from area B9).

MIRMICETTES (3)

CREATURE 6

Page 116

Initiative Perception +16

Treasure: The mirmicettes' treasure includes a gold bracelet worth 100 gp (a copy of which can be found in area B1) and a ruby bracelet worth 150 gp (its copy is in area B3), as well as a *moderate thurible of revelation* (with a copy in area B9). The rest of the treasures are minor grave goods worth a total of 150 gp.

B7. Nirmathas's Pride

Moderate 7

An ornate sarcophagus occupies the center of this crypt, a pair of golden arrows lying crossed atop its lid. A plinth bearing a plaque of polished bronze stands at the foot of the sarcophagus. Two wooden coffins, each smaller than the sarcophagus but no less ornate, rest atop biers on either side. Numerous gravestones rise from the floor in the southern half of the chamber.

This room holds the remains of notable Chernasardo Rangers, including Fort Commander Arsiella Dei's father, Irgal Nirmath, whose sarcophagus sits in the center of the room. The plaque at the foot of the sarcophagus bears Irgal's name, along with the words "For Nirmathas." The coffins on either side of the sarcophagus are those of two of the fort's previous commanders, while the grave markers to the south list the names of rangers known to have died in the line of duty, but whose remains were never recovered. Like the gravestones in area B4, these markers are purely symbolic and have no bodies buried beneath them.

Creatures: The entire room is alight with a soft radiance, as it is protected by an engerra Arsiella Dei invited into the fort specifically to guard her father's remains. The engerra immediately attacks any obvious undead that cross the chamber's threshold. Otherwise, it demands to know the purpose of the party's visit. Unless the characters convince the engerra they're here to pay respect to the fort's fallen leaders, the engerra assumes they're tomb robbers and attacks. Similarly, if the PCs trigger an evacuation, Arsiella warns the engerra that the fort has been invaded as she escapes with the *Chalice of Ozem*.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX

FORT OZEM CATACOMBS
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



ENGERRA

Page 114

Initiative Perception +20

Treasure: The golden arrows atop Irgal Nirmath's sarcophagus are worth 50 gp each.

B8. Contemplation Corner

Stone benches topped with rich, decorative padding line the walls of this high-ceilinged chamber. The benches are arranged to face a vast mosaic set into the floor. The mosaic depicts a longsword with brilliant sunburst quillons. Velvet ropes attached to stone pedestals separate the mosaic from the rest of the room.

Mosaic: Characters who succeed at a DC 18 Religion check recognize the mosaic as Iomedae's sword, *Heart's Edge*. The sword looks identical to the one depicted in the mosaic in area **A20**. The ropes that circle the mosaic can be detached from their pedestals (or simply hopped over) easily enough. A character who succeeds at a DC 27 Perception check to Search the mosaic notices a slight wear pattern on one part of the design. Lifting this section of the mosaic reveals an escape tunnel that stretches nearly a mile before emerging in another location of the Southern Fangwood.

Development: Of the fort's defenders, only Arsiella Dei is aware of the escape route. If the characters gain 21 AP or more, Arsiella Dei retrieves the *Chalice of Ozem* from area **B9** and might use the tunnels to escape with the artifact.

B9. Remembrances

Floor-to-ceiling shelves have been arranged throughout the length of this oddly shaped chamber. About of the third of the shelves are empty, while another third holds stacks of skeletal remains. The remaining shelves contain an assortment of statuettes, medals, and other small trinkets.

Treasure: With a quick search, the characters can find the objective of their mission, the *Chalice of Ozem*, on the shelf in the center of the room. Among the remaining treasure is an *iron medallion*, a 4th-rank *wand of shatter*, and 300 gp worth of military medals, jewelry, and other grave goods. There's also a mirmicette copy of a *moderate thurible of revelation*. The real thurible can be found among the mirmicettes' treasure hoard in area **B6**.

Development: Once the PCs claim the *Chalice of Ozem*, their mission is complete, and they are free to leave Fort Ozem. If the PCs haven't defeated the mirmicettes from area **B6**, the fey become distressed by the removal of the *Chalice*, in large part because they've yet to figure out how to copy it. The angry fey confront the party as the characters leave the room.

CREATURE 9

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs acquire the *Chalice of Ozem*, there's only one thing left to do: destroy Fort Ozem. How they go about destroying the fort is up to them and should be a victory lap at the end of the adventure. Possible strategies include the following.

- **Flood The Fort:** If the characters discover the crack in the fort's foundation (in area **B6**), they can exploit this architectural flaw to flood the fort. This strategy takes time, however, and if the PCs need to make a hasty retreat, they might not be around to witness the result of their handiwork.
- **Collapse the Stronghold:** Destroying the support pillars in area **B1** causes the stronghold portion of the fort to collapse. This strategy is tricky logistically, as it forces the characters to either retreat to the upper portion of the fort or find another way out of the catacombs. If the characters pursue this strategy, give them ample time to find the hidden tunnels in area **B8** before the stronghold collapses, or describe the confusion of the fort's defenders as the PCs make their escape, the fort's architecture raining down around them.
- **Brute Force:** If PCs have alchemical bombs, destructive spells, or magical items with similar effects, they can simply knock the fort to the ground with a few well-placed explosions. Several of the items of the PCs might discover throughout Fort Ozem, such as the stash of alchemist's fire in area **A6** or the *worm vial* in **A13**, could be used to weaken the fort's walls. The PCs can deploy these items on their own or in tandem with their personal items and abilities to destroy the fort.

If Arsiella Dei successfully evacuates the fort with the *Chalice of Ozem*, or if the PCs simply run out of time to complete their mission, they should report back to Seldeg Bhedlis to report their failure.

Final Meeting

Regardless of whether the PCs complete their mission, Seldeg Bhedlis expects to meet them at the Blighted Bower for an after-action report. If the characters successfully retrieved the *Chalice of Ozem*, the graveknight thanks them for their work and claims the chalice, his eyes gleaming with anticipation. He promises to share news of their success with Tar-Baphon and hints the party might be called upon for similar missions of destruction in the very near future.

If the PCs fail to retrieve the chalice, Seldeg rages but blames their failure more on the trickery of Fort Ozem's do-gooding defenders than the characters' incompetence. He promises the PCs he won't speak poorly of them to the Whispering Tyrant, provided they agree to accompany him to the Isle of Terror for a "more thorough debriefing." What this ominous offer entails has been left for you to decide.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX



OF BLOOD AND FAITH

Chapter 1: What Lies Beneath..... 62

The PCs learn that undead across the Gravelands have been exploring sites abandoned during Tar-Baphon's invasion. What the undead seek remains unclear, but the Knights of Lastwall call upon the heroes to travel to their next likely target, Corlach Keep. Unfortunately, Seldeg Bhedlis has already sent his minions to the keep to recover the *Spleen Bloodstone of Arazni*, which Seldeg believes is hidden beneath the keep. The heroes overcome the keep's defenses and defeat Seldeg's minions, then return to Vellumis with the long-lost artifact.

Chapter 2: To Swear the Crimson Oath 78

As the Knights of Lastwall debate about what to do with the newly discovered *Bloodstone*, the heroes meet with Arazni herself and are presented with an opportunity to earn her favor. They're then sent to recover the other two *Bloodstones* before Seldeg's minions reach them. One of the artifacts lies beneath Dortrot Ranch, where a lich allied with Seldeg musters an army of undead. The other is at Castle Firrine, an abandoned stronghold currently occupied by a group of orcs from the Burning Sun Hold.

Chapter 3: The Reckoning of Arazni..... 94

The PCs arrive at Hammer Rock to put a stop to Seldeg Bhedlis's foul ritual. Before confronting Seldeg, the heroes must deal with his servitors, including a ravener, an undead azata, and a corrupted norn. Should the PCs fail to stop Seldeg, the graveknight's ritual threatens to tear apart reality itself.

High-Level Heroes

Unless you're using "Of Blood and Faith" as part of an ongoing campaign, your group will have to create new PCs for this adventure. Creating an 18th-level character from scratch can be a challenge even for experienced players. Before play begins, you might encourage the players to think about what their typical turn in combat will look like, so that they won't be overwhelmed with options the first time initiative is rolled. If you'd like to give your players a chance to take their new characters out for a "test run," consider introducing a low-stakes combat encounter during their journey to Corlach Keep. Perhaps the wyrmwraith from area A2 spots the party as they approach the keep and attacks them for a round or two before returning to its roost.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Of Blood and Faith" is designed for four characters.

18

The PCs begin this adventure at 18th level.

19

The PCs should reach 19th level by the start of Chapter 2.

20

The PCs should reach 20th level at the start of Chapter 3.

THE MULTI-FACETED ARAZNI

"Of Blood and Faith" builds on the history of the goddess Arazni, a complex tale of tragedy, survival, and vengeance. At the start of the adventure, Arazni desires nothing more than her own agency, even if it makes her unpopular. The characters and the organizations presented in this adventure have differing relationships with her, leading each to view her actions through a different lens. Seldeg Bhedlis, the adventure's villain, sees her as a victim in need of salvation, as well as a tool he can use to secure his own redemption. The Knights of Lastwall and their allies are more varied in their views. Some see Arazni as a vengeful deity to be feared or scorned, while others take a more measured approach, cautiously allying themselves with the goddess when their interests align. In the case of the Crimson Reclaimers, Arazni is a source of strength, a divine patron as worthy of their devotion as any other god.

None of these views is entirely wrong. Each story represents a different relationship to Arazni and her complicated history on Golarion. More information about this history can be found in other Pathfinder books. The story of Arazni's ascension to godhood was told in the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path. The histories of the Knights of Lastwall, the Crimson Reclaimers, and many of the NPCs described in this book are detailed in *Pathfinder Lost Omens Knights of Lastwall*.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



CHAPTER 1: WHAT LIES BENEATH

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Centuries of undeath have not been kind to **Seldeg Bhedlis** (male graveknight spymaster 20). Once a valiant Knight of Ozem, Seldeg was corrupted during an ill-advised mission to Geb. There, he was transformed into a graveknight and assigned to serve the double role of bodyguard and captor to Arazni, former herald of Aroden. With Arazni's recent escape from Geb and subsequent apotheosis, Seldeg has fallen from the Ghost King's good graces. Once again, the desperate graveknight turns to an ill-conceived plan.

Seldeg intends to commit an atrocity against divinity itself. After ruminating on the ways in which the stories of Arazni, Iomedae, and his own intertwine, he's determined that the only way to save himself is to redeem Arazni. To enact this plan, Seldeg has set his sights on collecting a number of powerful artifacts, including the *Bloodstones of Arazni* and the *Chalice of Ozem*. The *Bloodstones* are the canopic jars in which

Geb preserved Arazni's organs when he transformed her into a lich. The *Chalice* was used by Iomedae during the Battle of Three Sorrows, the same conflict during which the Whispering Tyrant slew Arazni. Seldeg plans to use these artifacts to power a ritual to swap Iomedae and Arazni's fates. As Iomedae falls, Arazni will rise in her place. In doing so, Seldeg believes his own soul will be redeemed.

Seldeg's plans have already begun to bear fruit. After a successful raid on Fort Ozem, Seldeg now has the *Chalice of Ozem*. Though his search for the *Bloodstones* has proven more difficult, Seldeg recently captured **Addit Kalakin** (inquisitive female human scholar 12), a researcher obsessed with the fate of the *Bloodstones* after their disappearance during the fall of Vigil. From Addit, Seldeg learned of the Crimson Keepers, an organization once dedicated to safeguarding the *Bloodstones*. The graveknight now knows the locations the four *Bloodstones* and has already sent his minions to recover the artifacts.

While the Knights of Lastwall aren't yet aware of Seldeg's plans, heightened undead activity near former Knights of Ozem holdings have caught their attention. They contact the heroes, each a high-ranking member of the Knights of Lastwall or one of their allies, to investigate the matter. What begins as a routine scouting mission quickly uncovers Seldeg's plot to overturn the divine order.

GETTING STARTED

"Of Blood and Faith" begins at Castle Varitan in Vellumis, where **Beirivelle Starshine** (humble female human redeemer bard of Shelyn 11) has called a strategy meeting. Also in attendance is **Aylunna Varvatos** (respected female human cleric of Iomedae 14). As members of the Knights of Lastwall or their allies, the heroes are also invited to attend. As the meeting begins, sun streams through the windows, casting the conference hall in a dreamy haze. Beirivelle sips a rapidly cooling tea as she shuffles through scrolls.

Read the following as the heroes arrive.

"Undead never sleep in the Gravelands," Beirivelle Starshine begins as she unfurls a scouting report. "The Knights of Lastwall must stay vigilant."

Beirivelle begins plunking down cast-iron markers on the map spread out before her. One, then two, then a dozen markers drop onto the table, each thud signaling a force of undead troops located somewhere across the blighted land formerly known as Lastwall.

"Over the last few months, concerning patterns have emerged in the movement of the Whispering Tyrant's forces. Undead have been spotted near several abandoned fortifications monitored by the knights. When our scouts and diviners investigated these locations, they discovered the undead seemed to be on the hunt for something. Since most of these creatures have no mind of their own, a necromancer or other force must be commanding them. Their movements continue, so I presume they haven't found whatever it is they're looking for."

Aylunna Varvatos, a woman with soft eyes but a voice as hard as steel, opens a folder. "I've compiled a list of sites the undead haven't yet targeted. If you're willing, these locations should be investigated. As we don't know what inspires their search, our only option is to get ahead of their next target and see if there's something of interest there."

Beirivelle sighs. "The knights are already spread thin. Will you lend your arms to this cause?"

The heroes likely have questions for Aylunna and Beirivelle. In addition to the answers presented here, Aylunna and Beirivelle know general information about the Knights of Lastwall, the Gravelands, and

most common undead (including their immunities, weaknesses, and resistances).

What targets have you identified? Beirivelle directs the heroes to a cluster of markers on the northern border of the Gravelands. She points out a spot where two waterways meet, near the last marker she set down. "Based on the pattern of their recent movements, Corlach Keep is their next target. The keep lies where Fourmarch Creek feeds into the Pineflow River, a two-day march east from here."

What do you know about Corlach Keep? Aylunna unrolls a map of the area around the keep. "Corlach Keep rises from the middle of the river. A bridge leads to the keep proper, but it's visible only when the river is low. Otherwise, the water rises to your waist. The bridge is designed to drop to let boats pass, but be cautious—the mechanism might have malfunctioned since the keep was abandoned."

What do we know about the journey to Corlach Keep? Aylunna answers, "Moving through the Gravelands is always dangerous. A group of refugees recently made their way to Vellumis and report being harried by undead along the way. You'll almost certainly encounter undead as well, but nothing you won't be able to handle."

Are there other locations to check? Beirivelle looks over the map as she thinks. "There's a chance Dortrot Ranch or Castle Firrine could also be in play. But they're farther away from Vellumis—easily a week's ride—so they aren't strategic targets yet. Investigate Corlach Keep, then report back in."

Can we teleport to Corlach Keep? Aylunna smiles as if considering a favored pupil. "You're welcome to use any means of transportation you find best. I can't guarantee our description of the keep will be accurate enough for surefire teleportation, but we have a few sketches that can aid with this."

Once the PCs have finished asking questions, they can acquire gear and make other preparations in Vellumis. Beirivelle gives the heroes a writ that includes an order to the city's quartermasters to prioritize the party's requests. She encourages haste, however; if the heroes take more than a day to leave Vellumis, Beirivelle visits them and asks what they need to get on their way.

Travel in the Gravelands

Corlach Keep is approximately 40 miles from Vellumis. Groups with a walking Speed of 25 feet should be able to reach the keep in two days. For groups with a different movement speed, refer to the Travel Speed table (*Pathfinder Player Core* 438). Alternatively,



Beirivelle Starshine

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

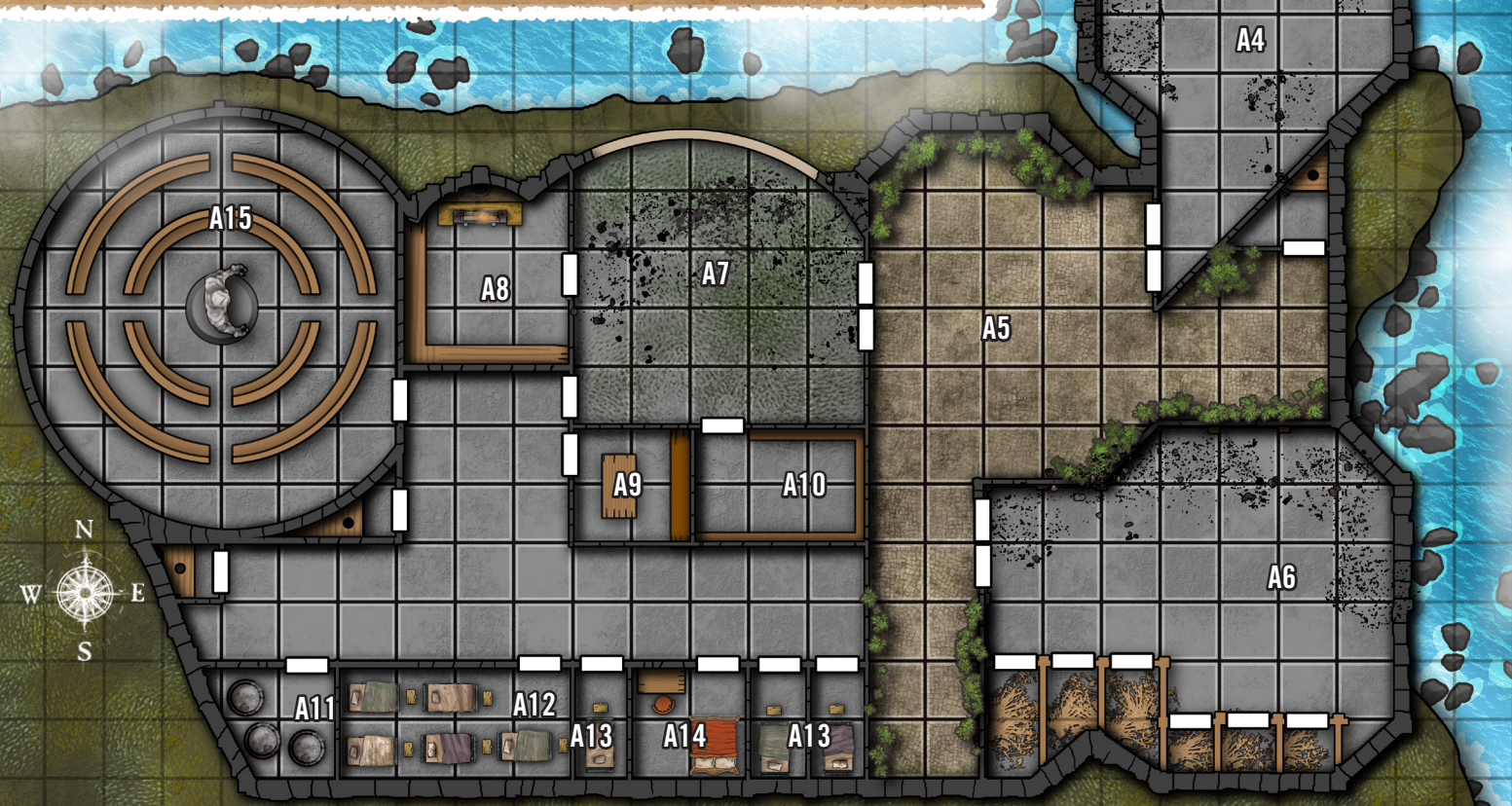
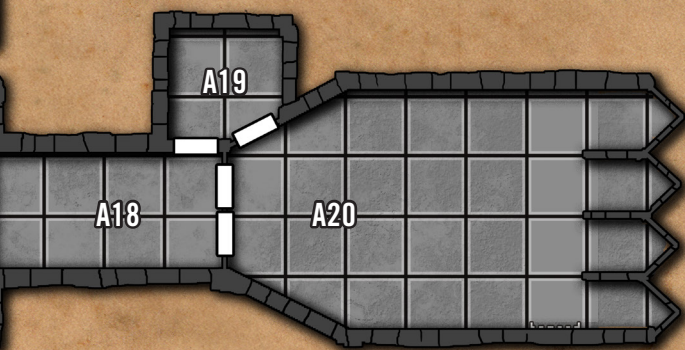
OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX



CORLACH KEEP
1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



teleportation abilities can transport the heroes directly to the area around Corlach Keep. Unless the GM wishes to introduce additional encounters during the journey, any undead or other creatures the PCs meet on their way to the keep are easily avoided or dispatched.

CORLACH KEEP

At the confluence of the Pineflow River and Fourmarch Creek, Corlach Keep rises from the water like an island of stone. A bridge connects the keep to the shore, but this structure is visible only during the dry season. The rest of the year, the bridge is hidden beneath several feet of water. Once a marvel of engineering, the bridge could be lowered for defense or to allow boats to dock at the keep's gates, but the mechanisms to control this movement have degraded to the point that the bridge is now inoperable. A 15-foot-wide gate opens onto the bridge from the keep and serves as the keep's only ground-level entrance. Watchtowers rise on either of Fourmarch Creek's shores, but like the underwater bridge, these structures have suffered from the passage of time.

Corlach Keep was built in two phases. The original structure encompasses areas **A4–A14** and is constructed from a dark gray stone with black speckling. A chapel extension (made of a uniformly light gray stone) was built in 3852 AR. Ostensibly constructed to house a chapel to Iomedae and an additional latrine, the extension's actual purpose was to conceal a series of chambers beneath the keep. These chambers were intended to serve as a sanctuary for the *Bloodstones of Arazni*. However, Tar-Baphon's forces invaded Lastwall before all the *Bloodstones* could be transported to the keep. Today only one of the four artifacts, the *Spleen Bloodstone*, is contained within the chambers (in area **A20**).

Use the map on page 64 for Corlach Keep. Unless otherwise stated, the keep's ceilings are 20 feet high. Areas with windows are one light level lower than the outside conditions. Areas without windows are dark.

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs approach Corlach Keep.

Corlach Keep rises from the conflux of the Pineflow River and Fourmarch Creek, a smaller waterway that feeds the river from the north. The only visible entrance to the keep is a gate built into the northern face. The gate opens mere inches above the water's surface. On either side of the river stand the remains of two watchtowers, though the northwestern tower is little more than a pile of rubble. The southeastern tower remains mostly intact, although it too shows signs of age.

A1. Watchtower Ground Floor

Low 18

The ground floor of this tower is carpeted with bones, rusty armor, and discarded weapons. In the center of the space, stairs wind around a central pillar. Wooden rafters fill the tower's upper reaches, casting a web of shadows across the structure's interior.

The Knights of Ozem stationed at Corlach Keep made their last stand against the Whispering Tyrant's forces in this watchtower on the river's southern shore. The remains of these defenders now blanket the tower's ground floor, making the area difficult terrain. The tower's wooden roof rises 60 feet above the ground and can be reached via the stairs in the middle of the tower. The wooden rafters begin 40 feet above the ground, making the upper 20 feet of the tower's interior difficult terrain for flying creatures. The rafters also grant standard cover to creatures in those spaces. Individual rafters are roughly 6 inches wide and require a DC 20 Acrobatics check to Balance while crossing them.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX





Creatures: The despair of ordering their soldiers to stand and fight while knowing the battle was already lost caused two of the keep's former commanders to rise as banshees. As the heroes enter the watchtower, the banshees lurk amid the rafters 45 feet above the ground (Stealth DC 35). During combat, they avoid closing to melee, using Wail to confound spellcasters, ranged combatants, and other vulnerable targets. They pursue characters who retreat but refuse to leave the tower if doing so would expose them to sunlight.

BANSHEES (2)

CREATURE 17

Pathfinder Monster Core 37

Initiative Perception +32

Treasure: Sifting through the bones uncovers a set of +3 *greater resilient full plate*, an *indestructible shield*, and a *major shadow runestone*.

A2. Watchtower Roof

Low 18

The watchtower's roof offers an unobstructed view of the countryside for miles around. Sentry platforms, one on each side of the structure, jut over the sides of the tower. Debris litters the platform to the northeast.

The roof of the watchtower is made of thick hardwood and, though somewhat rotted and worn with age, remains sturdy. The littered area on the northeast platform is difficult terrain.

Creatures: The tower's roof is home to an unusual pair of undead creatures: a lesser death and a wyrmwraith. The dragon died years ago during the attack on Corlach Keep. The lesser death arrived shortly thereafter to reap the dragon's soul, but was stymied when the creature clung too tightly to life and arose as a wyrmwraith. Now, the lesser death watches over the wyrmwraith, protecting it like a guardian during the daylight hours as it awaits the dragon's final death.

The lesser death and wyrmwraith rarely leave the vicinity of the tower but attack any creature that steps foot on the structure's roof. In combat, the wyrmwraith uses its Vitality Transfer ability to transfer vitality damage to the lesser death; the lesser death then harmlessly absorbs the damage thanks to its special void healing ability.

LESSER DEATH

CREATURE 17

Pathfinder Monster Core 185

Initiative Perception +34

WYRMWRAITH

CREATURE 17

RARE GARGANTUAN DRAGON INCORPOREAL UNDEAD UNHOLY WRAITH

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 296

Perception +29; darkvision, lifesense 120 feet

Languages Common, Draconic, Necril

Skills Acrobatics +30, Arcana +30, Intimidation +33, Religion +33, Stealth +33

Str -5, **Dex** +9, **Con** +0, **Int** +7, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +9

AC 39; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +32, **Will** +32

HP 280, void healing (Pathfinder Monster Core 360);

Immunities bleed, death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistances** all 20 (except force, *ghost touch*, spirit, or vitality; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 90 feet, DC 33

Sunlight Powerlessness A wyrmwraith in sunlight is clumsy 2 and stunned 2.

Vitality Transfer ☞ (divine) **Trigger** The wyrmwraith succeeds at a saving throw to resist vitality damage but still takes damage; **Effect** The wyrmwraith transfers all vitality damage from the effect to a single undead creature of their choice within 120 feet that they control or that's friendly or helpful to them.

Speed 50 feet, fly 80 feet

Melee ☞ spectral jaws +34 (reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d12+17 void plus drain life

Melee ☞ spectral claw +34 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d8+17 void plus divine dispelling and drain life

Divine Innate Spells DC 35; **8th** *charm* (undead targets only); **7th** *divine wrath* (×3), *execute*; **6th** *vampiric exsanguination*; **4th** *charm* (×3; undead targets only), *darkness*; **3rd** *bind undead* (at will)

Divine Dispelling (divine) A wyrmwraith's claws rend divine magic. Whenever a wyrmwraith hits a creature with a spectral claw Strike, the wyrmwraith can attempt a Religion check to counteract an ongoing divine spell effect on the creature.

Draconic Frenzy ☞☞ The wyrmwraith makes two spectral claw Strikes and one spectral jaws Strike in any order.

Drain Life (divine) When a wyrmwraith deals damage to a living creature with a spectral jaws or spectral claw Strike, the wyrmwraith gains 18 temporary Hit Points for 1 minute, and the creature must succeed at a DC 38 Fortitude save or become drained 2. Further damage dealt by the wyrmwraith's spectral jaws or spectral claw Strikes increase the value of the drained condition by 2 on a failed save, to a maximum of drained 4.

Ectoplasmic Form ☞ (divine) A wyrmwraith can push through the ectoplasmic veil to temporarily assume a physical form made of ectoplasm. The wyrmwraith loses the incorporeal trait for 1d4 rounds, though they can return to their incorporeal form as a free action before then. Once this ability ends, the wyrmwraith can't use this ability again for 1d4 rounds. While in their ectoplasmic form, the wyrmwraith's AC increases to 43 and they gain 100 temporary Hit Points. They lose their immunity to precision damage and all of their resistances. Their melee Strikes deal slashing and piercing damage, respectively, instead of void damage.

Phase Lurch ☞ **Requirements** The wyrmwraith is in their ectoplasmic form; **Effect** As the Stride action, but the wyrmwraith can pass through walls or material objects as

though they were incorporeal. They must begin and end their movement outside of any physical obstacles, and passing through solid material is difficult terrain.

Void Breath ♦♦ (divine, void) The wyrmwraith unleashes a burst of void energy that deals 18d6 void damage to all creatures in a 60-foot cone (DC 38 basic Reflex save). They can't use Void Breath again for 1d4 rounds.

Treasure: The wyrmwraith occasionally snatches the odd traveler and returns to its nest with the corpse. The heroes can find the remains of some of these travelers among the debris on the northeast platform. One of the corpses wears a belt adorned with a gem-studded chatelaine worth 1,000 gp. Attached to the chatelaine is a tiny handbell that functions as a *greater maestro's instrument*, a *greater skeleton key*, a vial of *ghost dust*, and a miniaturized *true endless grimoire* (*Pathfinder Secrets of Magic* 162) that fits comfortably in the reader's palm.

A3. Flooded Bridge

Moderate 18

Even in its deteriorated state, this bridge is clearly a marvel of engineering.

The bridge that separates Corlach Keep from the shoreline was designed to be raised and lowered as needed, but years of disuse have stuck the bridge in place. The iron structure now rests several feet beneath the water's surface, except when particularly dry weather lowers the river's waterline. The rest of the year, only its guardrails are visible. The bridge fills its space entirely, preventing creatures from Swimming beneath the bridge from one side to the other. While the bridge is submerged, a creature can cross it without Swimming, but the bridge is greater difficult terrain. So long as the bridge remains intact, the river's Swim DC is 20.

Creature: Centuries ago, an enormous river serpent plied this stretch of the Pineflow River. The unholy energy that suffuses the Gravelands has since animated the creature's bones. The skeletal serpent leaps from the water to attack living creatures that attempt to cross the bridge or otherwise approach the keep's gate. It focuses on Grabbing the slowest-moving creature, attempting to separate that creature from its allies.

Hazard: The bridge hasn't been maintained in years and is now on the brink of collapse. When a Medium or larger creature reaches the area (marked with a "T" on the map), the bridge begins to collapse.

OSSUARY WARDEN

CREATURE 19

UNIQUE HUGE MINDLESS SKELETON UNDEAD UNHOLY

Perception +32; darkvision, wavesense (imprecise) 120 feet (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360)

Skills Acrobatics +37, Athletics +40, Stealth +33

Str +10, **Dex** +6, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** +5, **Cha** -1

AC 42; **Fort** +34, **Ref** +29, **Will** +32

HP 265, void healing (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360); **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** cold 20, electricity 20, fire 20, piercing 20, slashing 20

Speed 20 feet, swim 60 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +36 (deadly 3d12, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 4d12+28 piercing plus Grab (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360)

Melee ♦ tail +36 (agile, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 4d10+20 bludgeoning

Breach ♦♦ The ossuary warden Leaps and makes a Strike at any point along its movement.

River Jump If the ossuary warden is in water, it can Leap vertically 60 feet and horizontally 60 feet, moving any creature it has Grabbed along with it. The warden doesn't take damage from falls into water.

COLLAPSING BRIDGE

HAZARD 16

UNIQUE COMPLEX MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth +38 (expert)

Description Metal supports twist and shear off the bridge, causing stretches of the structure to collapse.

Disable DC 40 Engineering Lore to identify and reinforce weak points, DC 43 Crafting (master) to construct secondary supports, or DC 45 Athletics (legendary) to reinforce the bridge with found materials; three successes are required to halt the collapse

AC 39; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +25

Hardness 25; **HP** 104 (BT 52); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Bridge Collapse ⤴ **Trigger** A Medium or larger creature steps onto the bridge's weak point; **Effect** The bridge collapses in the creature's square, then rolls initiative. The DC to Grab an Edge on the bridge is 38. Once the bridge begins to collapse, the river's Swim DC increases to 36 as the water churns with the falling debris. A creature that starts its turn swimming within 15 feet of the bridge takes 10d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 41 basic Reflex save).

Routine (1 action) The collapse radiates out from the damaged section of the bridge. All squares adjacent to a collapsed section also fall into the water.

A4. Hardened Entry

Trivial 18

The gates to Corlach Keep hang lopsided in their frame, swaying crookedly with every gust of wind. A bridge connects directly to this threshold, leaving no solid ground on which to step without entering the keep proper.

The entrance to Corlach's Keep was hardened against invaders, forming a natural pinch point for land-based attacks. The keep's gates stood 10 feet tall and could be opened simultaneously to allow wagon deliveries. Even if the bridge has collapsed entirely, climbing from the river to the entrance is a relatively simple feat (Climb DC 25).

Hazard: This entrance's defenses remain active despite years of disuse. If depressed, a pressure plate just beyond

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



the keep's threshold causes (marked with a "T" on the map) a portcullis to drop from the ceiling, separating the intruder from the bridge. The spiked points of the portcullis then crush vials of alchemical reagents concealed beneath a grate in the floor, filling the entry with an acidic cloud.

HARDENED ENTRY

HAZARD 18

UNCOMMON COMPLEX MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth +35 (master)

Description A portcullis drops from the ceiling, landing with a heavy thunk. Seconds later, a cloud of acid rises from a metal grate in the floor.

Disable DC 45 Athletics to prevent the portcullis from dropping, DC 48 Crafting (master) to create a compound to neutralize the cloud of acid, or DC 35 Thievery (expert) to jam the pressure plate

AC 42; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +27

Hardness 29; **HP** 110 (BT 55); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Falling Portcullis  **Trigger** A creature Strides beneath the portcullis while it is raised; **Effect** The portcullis slams down, driving its sharpened ends through a grate in the floor. Creatures directly beneath the portcullis take 3d12+20 piercing damage (DC 40 basic Reflex save). The portcullis is made of adamantine and has Hardness 31 and 120 HP (BT 60). The trap then rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action) A cloud of acidic vapor rises from the grate beneath the portcullis in a 5-foot emanation. Any creature that enters the area or starts its turn inside the cloud takes 3d12+20 acid damage (DC 40 basic Fortitude save). A creature that critically fails the save also takes 1d12 persistent acid damage. Each time the hazard uses this routine beyond the first, increase the radius of the emanation by 5 feet.

Reset Once triggered, the trap must be manually reset by raising the portcullis. Once all the vials are smashed, the trap can't use its routine again until the vials are replaced.

Treasure: The grate can be propped open to grant access to the alchemical reagents that caused the acidic cloud. Initially, a total of 10 major acid flasks were stored beneath the grate, but one of the flasks is consumed each time the hardened entry releases a cloud of acid.

A5. Courtyard

Though this inner courtyard is open to the sky, the keep's high walls muffle the sounds of the river outside. Gravel pathways wind to the main building and an outbuilding to the south. Just beyond the paths lie stretches of landscaping, once well kept but now choked with weeds.

The keep's courtyard hasn't been tended since Lastwall fell. Moving along the gravel paths presents no problem, but the patches of overgrown landscaping along the walls are difficult terrain.

A6. Stables

Severe 18

A stone outbuilding takes up the south end of the yard. Black mold streaks the structure's wooden double doors, which have been barred hastily from the outside.

When Tar-Baphon's forces marched on Corlach Keep, the swiftness of the attack caught the knights unaware, and they were forced to leave their mounts behind. As the keep fell, the horses died trying to escape the stable, and in their desperation arose as moldering steeds. Anyone who approaches the stable can hear the horses' hooves clattering in vain against the structure's walls.

Hazard: The interior of the stables is carpeted with black mold, traces of which can be seen on the stable doors. The mold thrives on undead flesh and becomes carnivorous after prolonged contact with void energy. Approaching the stable's doors releases a burst of the mold's carnivorous spores.

Creatures: Opening the stable doors causes the steeds inside to frenzy. They surge into the courtyard, using Athletics for initiative.

MOLDERING STEEDS (4)

CREATURE 16

Page 117

Initiative Athletics +32

CARNIVOROUS MOLD

HAZARD 18

UNCOMMON ENVIRONMENTAL FUNGUS

Stealth DC 36 (expert)

Description Spores explode onto nearby creatures, leaving welts as the mold dissolves exposed flesh.

Disable DC 42 Religion (legendary) to neutralize the void energy that animates the mold, or DC 36 Survival (master) to remove the mold without triggering the spores

AC 40; **Fort** +37, **Ref** +29

HP 130 (BT 65); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** vitality 20

Spore Explosion  **Trigger** A living creature moves adjacent to the mold or damages the mold; **Effect** All creatures within 15 feet of the mold are exposed to the flesh-eating spores.

Flesh-Eating Spores (contact, poison, void) The flesh-eating spores leave red rings on the skin as they dissolve the target's flesh; **Saving Throw** DC 44 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 4d10 void damage and drained 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 6d10 void damage and drained 2 (1 round); **Stage 3** 8d10 void damage and drained 3 (1 round)

Treasure: The wooden walls of the stable's individual stalls have been reduced to splinters. A Knight of Ozem stashed a bag of supplies in what remains of the western stall but died before retrieving it. The bag contains a moldy cloak with a *runestone* pinned to it like a brooch. The *runestone* is etched with a *major resilient* rune. The bag also holds a *whistle of calling* (*Knights of Lastwall* 91) and a quiver with 20 *ghost*

arrows. A battered iron tack box against the east wall contains a set of +3 *major resilient full-plate barding* sized for a Large horse.

A7. Grand Hall

Moderate 18

Sound echoes throughout this nearly empty hall. Tapestries hang in tatters on the walls, while a once-grand dining table, now reduced to splinters, fills the center of the space. A vast stained-glass window, miraculously intact, occupies a curved wall to the north. The window depicts an imposing knight with sword and shield.

When the Knights of Ozem still held Corlach Keep, this grand hall served as a space for meals and other gatherings. The room's ceilings rise 60 feet above the floor, making it the tallest point in the keep. Doors lead to areas A5, A8, A10, and the hallway to the living quarters (areas A11–A14).

Creatures: If a creature not affiliated with the Knights of Ozem enters that hall, an *embed message* spell cast on the knight in the stained-glass window booms out: “Guests must be accompanied at all times. Leave now and return as a guest of the Knights of Ozem.” Unless the offending creature leaves the hall immediately, a garrholdion bound to the Knights of Ozem rises from the floor before the window. A character can convince the garrholdion that they’re associated with the Knights by succeeding at a DC 37 Deception check to Lie. Alternatively, a creature can attempt a DC 38 Society check to recall an oath once spoken by the Knights, followed by a DC 38 Diplomacy or Performance check to recite it. The garrholdion attacks creatures that fail to assure it they’re affiliated with the knights, but it doesn’t pursue creatures that flee the hall.

OZEM-BOUND GARRHOLDION

CREATURE 20

Knights of Ozem-bound garrholdion (page 115)

Initiative Perception +33

A8. Kitchen

This kitchen remains in relatively sound condition, at least compared to the rest of the keep.

Treasure: Stacked on shelves and in cabinets throughout the space are numerous serving bowls, ewers, and other tableware. Most items are made from cold iron, a tradition from when the Knights of Ozem crafted as many items as they could from the material. The tableware totals 12 Bulk worth of high-grade cold iron items.

A9. Quartermaster's Office

A desk and several filing cabinets fill this cramped space. The filing cabinets contain the records of Corlach Keep’s logistical needs. Everything from shipments of grain to

requests for luxury goods are noted. The records offer a unique glimpse into the day-to-day life of Corlach Keep. When consulting these records, a creature gains a +1 item bonus to skill checks made to Recall Knowledge about the Knights of Ozem or Corlach Keep.

One of the cabinets is fitted with a superior lock, the key to which is lost to time. A creature can Force Open the cabinet with a successful DC 32 Athletics check, or can Pick the Lock with six successful DC 40 Thievery checks.

Treasure: The locked cabinet contains 4 major antidotes, 4 antiplagues, and 4 major elixirs of life, as well as 10 each of the following: adamantine arrows, adamantine bolts, cold iron arrows, cold iron bolts, silver arrows, and silver bolts.

A10. Armory

Trivial 18

The door to this room is secured with a superior lock. The door’s hardware has rusted over time, reducing the Athletics check to Force Open the door to DC 34. Alternatively, a PC can Pick the Lock with six successful DC 40 Thievery checks.



Divine Warden of Iomedae

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX



Racks for weapons and armor line the walls of this room, though they are empty of anything they once held.

Hazard: While they occupied the keep, the Knights of Ozem warded this armory against theft. If a creature touches one of the racks, an enormous gauntlet manifests to restrain the would-be thief. The gauntlet holds a creature in place until the creature escapes or for 1 hour, at which point the trap resets.

GRASPING GAUNTLET

HAZARD 18

UNCOMMON MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 46 (master)

Description A gauntlet of magical force clutches creatures trying to steal gear from the armory.

Disable DC 45 Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion to trick the hazard's magic into nullifying itself, DC 41 Athletics to wrestle the gauntlet into submission, DC 39 Thievery to slide an object into the gauntlet's grasp, or *dispel magic* (9th rank; counteract DC 41)

Seize Thief  (magical) **Trigger** A creature touches the warded area; **Effect** A gauntleted hand reaches out from the ward and attempts a gauntlet Strike. The hazard has an Athletics modifier of +37 for its Grab (Escape DC 47).

Melee  gauntlet +37 (magical), **Damage** 10d6+35 bludgeoning plus Improved Grab

Reset 1 hour

Treasure: The weapon and armor racks are bare, but a character who succeeds at a DC 40 Perception check to Search the room discovers a secret compartment beneath a false tile in the floor. The compartment contains *runestones* etched with a *major resilient* rune, a *major striking* rune, and a *greater winged* rune.

A11. Cistern

While Corlach Keep's location on the Pineflow River made drinking water plentiful, water storage remained a logistical puzzle. The bulk of this room is dedicated to metal tanks treated to prevent rust from leeching into the water stored within.

A12. Barracks

Bunks with attached footlockers line the walls of this room. Neat military tucks suggest the soldiers who lived here planned to return shortly, but the layer of dust that covers every surface tells a different tale.

Lower-ranking Knights of Ozem slept in these barracks as they rotated through Corlach Keep. A character who searches the footlockers finds mementos these knights left behind. In particular, one footlocker contains a stack of letters tied with a ribbon. This correspondence belonged to a knight-scholar named Nel and details her requests for research regarding Iomedae

prior to her ascension. A character who succeeds at a DC 36 Religion check to Recall Knowledge identifies an accompanying document as a previously lost transcript of Iomedae's Fourth Act, one of the eleven miracles she performed on her way to ascension. The transcript also contains a reference to Arazni (called the "herald of Aroden" in the text), who speaks of the yearning for freedom being a source of strength when all else is lost.

Treasure: The transcript of Iomedae's Fourth Act is worth 2,500 gp to a collector.

A13. Individual Lodging

These rooms housed the higher-ranking knights permanently stationed at Corlach Keep. The furnishings are sparse but sufficient: a simple bed and a nightstand with a washing basin. There is nothing of interest in these rooms.

A14. Commander's Quarters

The furnishings in this room are similar to those in area A13, except for an oak table that occupies the northwest corner. An ornate bronze bowl filled with ashes rests atop the table.

During the keep's final moments, Knight-Commander Aigend Telston predicted the battle was lost and burned any records she feared might be used against the Knights of Ozem. The ashes in the bronze bowl are all that remain of these battle plans.

Treasure: While the battle plans are beyond recovery, the bronze bowl is worth 8,500 gp.

A15. Chapel of Iomedae

Moderate 18

A 15-foot-tall statue of Iomedae as Aroden's herald rises like a pillar in the center of this chapel. Benches form a semicircle around the statue, though most are broken or overturned. High above, the chapel's domed ceiling has partially collapsed.

Creatures: The dome of this double-tall room rises 40 feet above the floor. As the characters arrive, four dybbuks hide among the shadows near the dome. The skultaker Onturat (area A19) stationed the dybbuks here to guard his retreat as he explored the areas beneath this chamber. The dybbuks remain hidden unless the characters discover the entrance to the ossuary (area A16), holding off their attack until the divine warden animates (see below).

Divine Warden: The statue of Iomedae is a divine warden, a construct created and sanctified to guard the entrance to the Bloodstone Sanctum. A character who views the statue's plinth from above notices a metal grate (hidden from ground level) cleverly built into the plinth beneath the warden's feet. Etched into the plinth are the words "Light of the sword against the darkness of death." Uttering this magical passphrase causes the warden to grind to life and step from the plinth,



allowing access to the grate. Otherwise, the warden attacks as soon as a creature touches or otherwise attempts to bypass the grate.

DYBBUKS (4)

Pathfinder Monster Core 136

Initiative Stealth +28

CREATURE 15

DIVINE WARDEN OF IOMEDAE

UNCOMMON HUGE CONSTRUCT DIVINE MINDLESS

Variant divine warden (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 73)

Perception +27; darkvision

Skills Intimidation +32

Str +0, **Dex** +9, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** -5

Items longsword

AC 37; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +28, **Will** +33

HP 290; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious, vitality, void; **Resistances** physical 10

Divine Destruction (divine, spirit) When the divine warden is reduced to 0 HP, it erupts with divine energy in a 30-foot emanation, dealing 16d6 spirit damage. Each creature in the area must attempt a DC 37 Will save.

Critical Success The creature takes half damage.

Success The creature takes full damage.

Failure The creature takes full damage and becomes temporarily cursed by the patron deity. The cursed creature is enfeebled 1 and stupefied 1 for 1 day; this is a curse effect that uses the Will save DC as the counteract DC.

Critical Failure As failure, except the cursed creature is enfeebled 2 and stupefied 2.

God-Bound The divine warden is bound to a specific patron deity upon its creation. The warden can't take hostile actions against a creature that openly wears or displays a symbol of its patron deity unless that creature uses a hostile action against the warden first. The warden gains an initial domain spell chosen from its deity's list of domains. The divine warden has 3 Focus Points.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *greater striking longsword* +33 (magical, versatile P), **Damage** 3d8+19 slashing

Divine Innate Spells DC 37, attack +29; **Cantrips** (8th) *divine lance*

Cleric Domain Spells 3 Focus Points, DC 37; **5th** *weapon surge* (*Pathfinder Player Core* 381)

Faithful Weapon While the divine warden wields the favored weapon of its patron deity, that weapon gains the effect of a *greater striking* rune.

Instrument of Faith The divine warden is a beacon for its deity's faith. A cleric of the divine warden's patron deity can channel a *heal* spell through a divine warden they can see within 60 feet. The cleric determines any targets or area for the spell as if they were standing in the divine warden's space.

Development: Once the divine warden moves from the plinth, the grate can be lifted easily from its setting. Doing so reveals a set of iron stairs that spiral into the catacombs below (areas A16–A20).

A16. Ossuary

Moderate 18

An iron staircase spirals from the chapel above into this solemn chamber. Niches filled with the bones of hundreds of fallen knights line the northern, southern, and western walls. Centered against the eastern wall is a funerary couch, on which the bones of two humanoids rest. Judging from the arrangement of these bones, the bodies on the couch were laid to rest in an embrace.

The skeletons on the funerary couch are the remains of **Oceanius** and **Glory Arcely** (human male knights), two knights who were partnered both in life and on the battlefield. They now embrace in death, lying atop an elaborate burial piece commissioned to immortalize



Glory Arcely

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



their lives as lovers and warriors. Oceanius and Glory survived the Battle of Three Sorrows together, and the carvings on the couch depict the roles Arazni and Iomedae played in that campaign. Arazni's story occupies the west side of the bench, while Iomedae's tale fills the east side. The figures meet in the middle, suggesting that defeat and victory are intertwined.

The carvings, in order from east to west, are:

Iomedae's Ascension (east end): Iomedae stands with her hands on her sword and a halo above her head. Her features are both sorrowful and certain.

Iomedae Reforging Her Blade (center-east): This carving depicts Iomedae as she reforges her sword in the midst of battle. The sixth of the 11 Acts of Iomedae, this scene highlights Iomedae's path to godhood and serves as a reminder of the need for strength after being broken.

Two Goddesses (center): Arazni and Iomedae stand back-to-back, depicting how they fought together and suggesting how their paths later diverged.

Arazni's Fall (center-west): Arazni is shown at the moment of her tragic death, plummeting to the ground as Tar-Baphon tosses her body aside during the Battle of Three Sorrows.

Arazni's Return (west end): Arazni's body lies inside a glass coffin. Though set in death, her features mirror the sorrow and certainty of Iomedae's.

Any hero trained in Religion can identify the figures as Arazni and Iomedae. Understanding the symbolism of the panels requires training in Arazni Lore or Iomedae Lore, legendary proficiency in Religion, or a successful DC 40 Religion check.

Creatures: After their deaths, Pharasma judged the Arcely husbands and allowed their souls to pass to Nirvana, where both were transformed into angels. Later, she granted them their greatest desire: to stand watch over the Bloodstone Sanctum. While their memories of their mortal lives have faded, Oceanius and Glory remain true to their charge and do everything in their power to protect the *Bloodstone* in the Bloodstone Sanctum.

When the heroes enter this area, the angels stand invisibly beside the funerary couch. They don't attack immediately, instead watching the characters to determine their intent. The angels reveal themselves only if the heroes discover the secret door leading to area A17.

Mere days before the heroes arrived, Oceanius and Glory were visited by the skulktaker Onturat, who in the guise of the Iomedaean scholar Addit Kalakin convinced the angels that Tar-Baphon had taken a renewed interest in Corlach Keep. He implored the angels to be on the lookout for anyone who might be an agent of the Whispering Tyrant. Now, Oceanius and Glory assume that anyone they don't recognize enters the ossuary with nefarious intent. The heroes can convince the angels otherwise with a DC 36 Arazni Lore or Iomedae Lore check, a DC

40 Diplomacy check, or a DC 38 Religion check. Characters who wear a religious symbol of either Arazni or Iomedae—or who can otherwise prove their devotion to either goddess—gain a +2 circumstance bonus to their checks. On a success, the heroes earn 1 Conviction Point (2 points on a critical success). On a critical failure, the heroes gain 1 Distrust Point. If the heroes ever earn 2 Distrust Points, the angels attack. After earning 4 Conviction Points, the angels believe the heroes come to the Sanctum with good intentions. They allow the characters to pass, pointing out the secret door to area A17.

Once the heroes earn at least 1 Conviction Point, the angels become willing to answer questions about Corlach Keep and the Bloodstone Sanctum. Some of the questions the heroes might pose follow. The angels can also share the information presented in Corlach Keep's background on page 65, but any knowledge they have of more recent events comes from Addit Kalakin, the Iomedaean scholar who visited the Bloodstone Sanctum after the Tar-Baphon's invasion several years ago. While the angels can sense the evil that now permeates Lastwall, their divine charge forbids them from abandoning the Bloodstone Sanctum. When they answer questions, the angels speak in unison.

What are you guarding? "A vault constructed beneath Corlach Keep to hold the *Bloodstones of Arazni*, the goddess's visceral remains."

What do you know about the *Bloodstones of Arazni*? "When Geb transformed the body of Arazni into a lich, he preserved her heart, lungs, liver, and spleen inside four clay jars. Each *Bloodstone* contains a sliver of Arazni's power. Anyone who possesses all four *Bloodstones* can control Arazni herself."

How did one of the *Bloodstones* end up here? "When the Knights of Ozem summoned Arazni to fight at the Battle of Three Sorrows, she raged at how they bound her will, calling her as if she would not have lent her aid willingly. Later, when the Knights learned of Arazni's fate at the hands of the Ghost King, they sent a contingent to Geb to recover the *Bloodstones*. Ever since, the *Bloodstones* have been in the hands of a secret faction within the church of Iomedae. This faction, known as the Crimson Keepers, built the Bloodstone Sanctum to house all four *Bloodstones*, but the Keepers managed to transport only one of them here before the Whispering Tyrant's return."

When were the Crimson Keepers last here? "They arrived with the first *Bloodstone* five or more years ago. The blur of centuries means we cannot recall more than that. They placed wards upon the Sanctum and went on their way."

Who else knows about the *Bloodstones*? At this, a look of uncertainty passes over the faces of both angels. "Several years ago, Addit Kalakin, a scholar devoted to Iomedae, followed the trail of history here. We judged

her worthy of knowing the truth and permitted her access to the Sanctum. She left to seek out the location of the missing *Bloodstones* but has recently returned. She is here now, in fact, inside the Sanctum.”

Development: On her initial visit, Addit Kalakin proved her worth to the angels and was granted access to the Sanctum. The individual currently in the Sanctum, however, is a skulltaker named Onturat, one of Seldeg Bhedlis’s most powerful agents. Using magic to hide his appearance and drawing on his intimate knowledge of Addit’s memories, Onturat talked his way past the angels and is now in area **A19**, puzzling over a way to retrieve the *Spleen Bloodstone* from the Bloodstone Sanctum (area **A20**).

OCEANIUS AND GLORY ARCELY

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE LARGE ANGEL CELESTIAL HOLY

Male angel guardians

Perception +32; darkvision

Languages Diabolic, Draconic, Empyrean; *truespeech*

Skills Athletics +36, Intimidation +34, Religion +36

Str +8, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** +5, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +7

Items +2 *greater striking greatsword*

AC 42; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +29, **Will** +32; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 360, regeneration 20 (deactivated by evil); **Weaknesses** unholy 20

Aura of Righteousness (aura, divine, holy) 20 feet. Allies in the angel’s aura gain a +2 status bonus to AC against unholy creatures and a +2 status bonus to damage rolls against unholy creatures. The area in the aura is difficult terrain for unholy creatures.

Speed 25 feet, fly 60 feet

Melee ♦ *holy greatsword* +36 (holy, magical, versatile P),

Damage 3d12+19 slashing plus 1d4 spirit (or 2d4 spirit vs. an unholy target)

Divine Innate Spells DC 41, attack +33; **8th** *dispel magic*, *divine wrath*, *earthquake*, *heal*, *sunburst*; **7th** *charm*, *clear mind* (at will), *divine decree*, *interplanar teleport*; **6th** *blessed boundary*, *dispel magic* (at will); **5th** *breath of life*, *cleanse affliction* (×3), *unfettered movement*; **2nd** *invisibility* (at will; self only), *sure footing*; **Constant (5th)** *truespeech*

Rituals DC 41; **5th** *call spirit*, *resurrect*

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, divine, polymorph, transmutation) The angel takes on the appearance of any Small or Medium humanoid. This doesn’t change their Speed or Strikes.

Holy Armaments (divine, holy) Any weapon gains the effect of a *holy* property rune while the angel wields it.

Secret Door: The niches on the southern wall are noticeably shallower than those elsewhere in the ossuary, a detail the characters can identify with a successful DC 38 Perception check to Search. Pushing against this section of niches opens a hidden door to area **A17**, the Bloodstone Sanctum antechamber.

Rewards: If they convince Oceanius and Glory to let them pass peaceably, grant the heroes XP as if they had defeated the angels in combat.

A17. Bloodstone Sanctum Antechamber

Moderate 18

A hallway opens into this chamber from the north. Simple benches offer space to sit along the western wall. Above the benches is a row of hooks, one of which supports a hat with an elephant bird feather tucked into its band.

A set of double doors stands in the middle of the eastern wall. Carvings on the door depict a woman glaring down at the viewer. The woman’s body bears four distinct wounds, each painted as if they were still bleeding. One wound passes over the woman’s neck, another over her heart, and the remaining two over her abdomen. Four statues depicting the same woman stand at attention, two on either side of the doors.

This antechamber leads to the cleansing room (area **A18**) and served as a place for Crimson Keepers to store items that might be damaged by the cleansing process.

Creatures: The four statues near the eastern doors were sculpted as divine wardens dedicated to Arazni. Each is associated with one of her missing organs. Moving clockwise from the northwest statue, they are the heart warden, the lungs warden, the liver warden, and the spleen warden. The wardens attack creatures that don’t display Arazni’s religious symbol as they approach the southern doors.

DIVINE WARDENS OF ARAZNI (4)

CREATURE 16

UNCOMMON MEDIUM CONSTRUCT DIVINE MINDLESS

Perception +27; darkvision

Skills Intimidation +32

Str +0, **Dex** +9, **Con** +6, **Int** –5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** –5

Items rapier

AC 37; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +28, **Will** +33

HP 290; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious, vitality, void;

Resistances physical 10

Divine Destruction (divine, spirit) When the divine warden is reduced to 0 HP, it erupts with divine energy in a 30-foot emanation, dealing 16d6 spirit damage. Each creature in the area must attempt a DC 37 Will save.

Critical Success The creature takes half damage.

Success The creature takes full damage.

Failure The creature takes full damage and becomes temporarily cursed by the patron deity. The cursed creature is enfeebled 1 and stupefied 1 for 1 day; this is a curse effect that uses the Will save DC as the counteract DC.

Critical Failure As failure, except the cursed creature is enfeebled 2 and stupefied 2.

God-Bound The divine warden is bound to a specific patron deity upon its creation. The warden can’t take hostile

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

actions against a creature that openly wears or displays a symbol of its patron deity unless that creature uses a hostile action against the warden first. The warden gains an initial domain spell chosen from its deity's list of domains. The divine warden has 3 Focus Points.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *greater striking rapier* +33 (deadly 2d8, disarm, finesse, magical), **Damage** 3d6+19 piercing

Divine Innate Spells DC 37, attack +29; **Cantrips (8th)** *divine lance*

Cleric Domain Spells 3 Focus Points, DC 37; **5th** *savor the sting* (*Pathfinder Player Core* 378)

Faithful Weapon While the divine warden wields the favored weapon of its patron deity, that weapon gains the effect of a *greater striking* rune.

Instrument of Faith The divine warden is a beacon for its deity's faith. A cleric of the divine warden's patron deity can channel a *heal* spell through a divine warden they can see within 60 feet. The cleric determines any targets or area for the spell as if they were standing in the divine warden's space.

Hazard: The carving on the double door to the east depicts Arazni after the removal of her organs. The doors are warded with four *rune traps* (7th rank; counteract DC 38), each of which stores a *never mind* spell (DC 38). A PC can spot the *rune traps* with a successful DC 38 Perception check. Opening the doors triggers all four runes simultaneously; each rune targets the creature closest to the doors that hasn't already been targeted. The runes reset 1 round later. Each rune must be disabled separately, but touching a religious symbol of Arazni to the doors deactivates all four runes for 1 minute.

Treasure: The hat with the elephant bird feather functions as a *type IV spacious pouch*. Inside the hat is a pouch full of diamonds worth a total of 2,500 gp, along with a note that reads: "To pay for my resurrection or funeral, as appropriate."

Development: Sounds of combat with the divine wardens carries into the sacristy (area A19), alerting the skultaker Onturat in that area.

Rewards: If the heroes peacefully bypass the divine wardens (for example, if each character wears a religious symbol of Arazni), grant them XP as though they defeated the wardens in combat. Grant the heroes an additional 40 XP for dealing with the *rune traps*.

A18. Cleansing Chamber

Low 18

This room appears empty, save for double doors at the western and eastern ends, and a smaller single door to the north. Unlike the stone double doors, the single door sitting to the north is made of adamantine.

Once the cleansing suite is activated (see Hazard below), the doors to area A17 and A20 slam shut and lock with deadbolts until the cleansing cycle is complete,

a process that takes 1 minute. Opening a door secured with deadbolts requires a successful DC 38 Athletics check to Force Open. The deadbolts are built into the interior of the doors and aren't visible, but a PC who is legendary in Thievery can disable the deadbolts with a successful DC 42 check to Pick a Lock. An emergency escape switch is located near the door to area A17, but it requires a successful DC 38 Perception check to spot. Activating the escape switch requires an Interact action and only opens the door to A17.

The door to area A19 is secured with a superior lock, which a PC can pick with six successful DC 40 Thievery checks. The lock is made of solid, high-grade adamantine (*Pathfinder GM Core* 253) and has Hardness 34, 136 HP, and BT 68.

Hazard: Three magical runes on the ceiling are designed to cleanse the chamber of evil or magical influences. The Crimson Keepers would pause in this chamber, allowing the runes to cleanse them of contaminants, before continuing to the Bloodstone Sanctuary (area A20). After the hazard deactivates, the doors to area A17 or A20 open, although the door to area A19 remains locked.

CLEANSING SUITE

HAZARD 19

UNIQUE COMPLEX DIVINE HOLY MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth +37 (master)

Description Deadbolts inside the doors clunk as three glowing runes appear on the ceiling.

Disable DC 42 Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion to erase the runes, or DC 46 Crafting or Thievery to destroy the runes, or *dispel magic* (9th rank, counteract DC 41); each rune requires a success to remove (three runes total)

AC 40; **Fort** +38, **Ref** +29, **Will** +35

Hardness 31 (runes); **HP** 130 (BT 65)

Deadbolts ⤴ **Trigger** A creature approaches within 10 feet of the cleansing suite's eastern doors; **Effect** The doors to the chamber slam shut and seal with deadbolts. The hazard rolls initiative.

Routine (3 actions) The cleansing suite activates one of its runes. The hazard can't activate the same rune more than once per turn. Disabling a rune removes one of the hazard's actions and prevents the hazard from activating that rune.

Rune Against Evil ♦♦♦ (divine, holy) The hazard fills the chamber with holy energy that deals 6d6+20 spirit damage (DC 41 basic Fortitude save) to creatures with the unholy trait.

Rune Against Magic ♦♦♦ (divine) The hazard casts *dispel magic* (9th rank, counteract +31) that targets a spell or effect on each creature in the chamber.

Rune Against Scrying ♦♦♦ (detection, divine) The hazard casts *detect scrying*. If it detects a scrying effect in the chamber, it casts *hidden mind* on each affected creature and *dispel magic* on the effect (9th rank, counteract +31).

Reset 1 minute after the hazard activates, the deadbolts unlock and the hazard resets.

Rewards: Unless any of the heroes have the unholy trait, they can simply wait out the hazard until it resets. Award the heroes 60 XP if they leave the area with the hazard in working order.

Development: The cleansing suite took the skultaker Onturat by surprise, as the runes posed no threat to Addit when she first passed through this area. However, using Addit's memories he was able to cast *translocate* to teleport directly to the Bloodstone Sanctum (area A20). Unable to overcome the *Bloodstone's* defenses, he then retreated to the sacristy (area A19) to ponder his next move. Unless the party takes measures to remain silent, noise in this area alerts Onturat there.

A19. Sacristy

Low 18

Shelves along the northern wall hold the trappings of various holy rites: religious symbols, altar cloths, mineral oils, and other mundane goods that become sacred only in the context of the rites. A door made of high-grade cold iron opens into area A20, while an adamantine door leads to area A18. Both doors are secured with superior locks (DC 40; six successes).

Creatures: When Seldeg Bhedlis first captured Addit Kalakin, he turned over the scholar to one of his most powerful servants, a skultaker named **Onturat**, to harvest any useful information the scholar had learned about the *Bloodstones*. To Seldeg's delight, Addit not only knew the location of the *Bloodstones*, but she had studied one of the artifacts in person. Using magic to disguise his form and Addit's memories to guide his steps, Onturat bypassed nearly all of Corlach Keep's defenses. His only roadblock has been the enchantments that protect the *Spleen Bloodstone of Arazni* in the Bloodstone Sanctum (area A20). He has retreated here to contemplate the matter, but the party's arrival gives the quick-thinking skultaker what he believes to be a solution to the problem.

If he hears the party approach, Onturat casts *metamorphosis* to appear as Addit, a middle-aged human woman with short-cropped silver hair and vibrant features. Using Addit's memories to craft his words, he masquerades as the scholar, attempting to convince the party to retrieve the *Bloodstone* for him. Some of the questions the characters might have for Onturat, and the skultaker's answers, follow.

Who are you, and what are you doing here? "My name is Addit Kalakin, a scholar and loyal servant of Iomedae. For years, I've sought to track down the location of a collection of powerful relics. My investigation has brought me here."

What are these relics you're looking for? "If you've made it this far into the Sanctum, I suspect you already know. The *Bloodstones of Arazni* have been lost ever since the Whispering Tyrant transformed Lastwall into what it is today. But my research has led me to believe that a sect within my order saved the *Bloodstones* from destruction and transported one of the relics here. Thankfully, I was right."

One of the Bloodstones is here? Onturat gestures to the door leading to area A20. "Yes, the *Bloodstone* lies just beyond this door. Unfortunately, the magic protecting the *Bloodstone* prevents me from reaching it."

Why do you want to take the Bloodstone? "I've learned that one of Geb's former servants, a graveknight named Seldeg Bhedlis, has defected to the Whispering Tyrant after losing favor with his former master. Seldeg now seeks to recover the *Bloodstones* to fuel a ritual to redeem Arazni. If he is successful, the fates of Arazni and Iomedae will be reversed. Iomedae will fall, and Arazni will rise to take her place, with Seldeg at her side. Anyone who possesses the *Bloodstones* holds the fate of two goddesses in their hands. The *Bloodstones* must be returned to the church of Iomedae, where they can be kept safe. Perhaps you can help me do so?"

Corlach Keep is dangerous! How did you make it this far by yourself? Onturat smiles. "The Keep's protections are designed to prevent those who seek to use the *Bloodstone* for evil from entering. My faith in Iomedae has kept me safe."

Using his skeletal lore ability, Onturat can recall anything Addit Kalakin knew in life with near-perfect accuracy. The characters can see through Onturat's deception with a DC 38 Perception check to Sense Motive. Other than hiding his identity, however, Onturat is both honest and forthcoming with the information he shares with the party. Certain he can simply destroy the heroes once they've served their purpose, Onturat has no qualms about revealing Seldeg's plans if doing so convinces the party to retrieve the *Bloodstone* for him.

If the heroes discover his identity, Onturat drops his disguise and attacks. Fearful of the cleansing runes in area A19, he avoids returning to that area. Instead, he targets characters who retreat to the cleansing chamber with spells or bone javelin Strikes.

ONTURAT

CREATURE 19

UNIQUE HUGE UNDEAD UNHOLY

Variant skultaker (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 314)

Perception +34; darkvision, truesight

Languages Necril, skeletal lore languages

Skills Acrobatics +36, Deception +38, Intimidation +35, Religion +32, Skeletal Lore +32, Stealth +34

Str +8, **Dex** +6, **Con** +6, **Int** +7, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +7

Skeletal Lore (divine) Onturat taps into the memories of the creatures whose bones make up his body. This gives him the Skeletal Lore skill, which he can use to Recall Knowledge of any kind. In addition, he can speak and understand all the languages known by the creatures whose bones make up his body (typically Common and the regional language of the skultaker's home region). Onturat can use Skeletal Lore as the primary skill check for the *collective memories* ritual (*Pathfinder Player Core* 391), and he can cast *collective memories* without secondary casters.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX



AC 44; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +35, **Will** +37; +1 status to all saves vs. vitality

HP 335, void healing (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360); **Immunities** bleed, cold, death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** piercing 15, slashing 15

Shard Storm (air, aura, divine) 10 feet. A cloud of bone shards surrounds the skultaker. When a creature moves into the emanation or begins its turn there, shard storm deals 4d6 slashing damage and 4d6 void damage to the creature, with a DC 42 basic Reflex save.

If the creature has resistance or immunity to void damage, or an effect that protects it against death effects, or an effect that protects it against the doomed or drained condition, the creature must first succeed at a DC 42 Will save or have all such benefits suppressed for 1 minute.

Speed 30 feet, fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +37 (deadly 2d12, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d10+16 piercing plus 3d6 void and void drain

Melee ♦ claw +37 (agile, deadly 2d12, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d6+16 slashing plus 3d6 void and void drain

Ranged ♦ bone javelin +35 (magical, thrown 100 feet), **Damage** 3d8+8 piercing plus 3d6 void

Divine Innate Spells DC 42; **9th** *metamorphosis*; **8th** *desiccate* (×2), *execute* (×2), *punishing winds* (×2); **5th** *translocate* (×2); **Constant (6th)** *truesight*

Divine Rituals DC 42; **7th** *collective memories* (see also Skeletal Lore)

Bonetaker (divine) Whenever a creature dies within 60 feet of a skultaker, the skultaker draws a portion of the creature's bones into its shard storm. The creature must succeed at a DC 42 Will save or rise as a skeletal champion (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 312) in 1d4 rounds. These skeletal champions are controlled by the skultaker.

Void Drain (divine) When a skultaker hits with a melee Strike, the target must succeed at a DC 42 Fortitude save or become drained 2 and doomed 1.

Splintered Ground ♦ The skultaker causes splintered bones to erupt from all solid surfaces in a 100-foot emanation, except for surfaces of worked stone. A creature moving through the bones takes 10 piercing damage and 10 void damage for every 5 feet of movement. The first time each round a creature takes piercing damage from these splintered bones, it must succeed at a DC 42 Reflex save or take a -10-foot circumstance penalty to all Speeds for 10 minutes, or a -15-foot circumstance penalty for 24 hours on a critical failure. The bones remain in place until the skultaker uses this action again or the bones are manually removed, which takes 10 minutes for each 5-foot square.

Development: If Onturat tricks the heroes into retrieving the *Bloodstone* for him, he accompanies the PCs into Bloodstone Vault. Once the party removes the *Bloodstone* from its resting place, he drops his ruse and attacks, attempting to claim the artifact for himself. This increases the difficulty of the encounter in area **A20** to

extreme. Onturat reserves one casting of *translocate* to flee the Keep if he finds himself outmatched. If Onturat escapes, the characters encounter the skultaker again before the final fight with Seldeg in Chapter 3 of this adventure.

Rewards: Award the characters 20 XP if they discover Onturat's identity before retrieving the *Bloodstone*.

A20. Bloodstone Vault

Moderate 18

The floor of this chamber slopes downward from the entrance into a spacious vault. Four alcoves, their entrances blocked with thick metal grates, stand in a row along the eastern wall. Carved above each alcove are the room's only decorations: images of a heart, a pair of lungs, a liver, and a spleen. Pedestals inside the first three alcoves await objects to be placed on them. The pedestal in the southernmost alcove supports a clay jar with the skull of a monstrous one-eyed creature carved into its lid.

The ceilings of this chamber are 15 feet high. The walls, floors, and ceiling are solid stone embedded with a thin layer of adamantine. The entirety of the vault is warded with a 10th-rank *consecrate* ritual, which attempts to counteract teleportation effects (+33 counteract check) and grants worshippers of Arazni within the area a +1 status bonus to attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and Perception checks.

Bloodstone Alcoves: The four alcoves in the eastern end of the room were built to contain the *Bloodstones of Arazni*. Currently, only the *Spleen Bloodstone* is present. To claim the *Bloodstone*, the characters must bypass a number of protections, both mundane and magical. First, the metal grating that blocks the entrance to the alcove is made of high-grade adamantine (Hardness 34, 136 HP, BT 68). The gaps between the bars of the grating are too small for Small or larger creatures to Squeeze through, although a Tiny creature could do so by succeeding at a DC 38 Acrobatics check. A creature under the effect of a *vapor form* spell or similar effect could also pass through the grating. Teleportation could work as well, but keep in mind that the vault's *consecrate* effect attempts to counteract teleportation by anyone other than a worshipper of Arazni. The grating can also be Forced Open with a successful DC 40 Athletics check.

Inside the alcove, an invisible field of force (as a 10th-rank *wall of force*) envelops the pedestal on which the *Bloodstone* rests. So long as the field remains, creatures outside the field can't move, touch, or otherwise interact with the *Bloodstone* or the pedestal. The field has Hardness 30 and 100 HP, and it's immune to critical hits and precision damage. The field can be counteracted as normal (10th rank, counteract DC 43), and it is automatically destroyed by a *disintegrate* spell of any rank.

Finally, the *Bloodstone* is enchanted with a clever illusion that conceals its true location and prevents it from being moved from the pedestal. A creature that attempts to grasp the *Bloodstone* finds their hands passing through midair, as if the artifact were not there at all. The illusion can be counteracted (10th rank, counteract DC 43). Otherwise, removing the *Bloodstone* requires a successful DC 40 Thievery check, followed by a DC 5 flat check due to the concealment effect. A creature that critically succeeds at the Thievery check also succeeds at the flat check to overcome the concealment.

Creatures: As soon as the *Bloodstone* is removed from its pedestal, the spirits of the Knights of Ozem entombed beneath Corlach Keep rise with a mournful wail to prevent the relic's theft. They emerge from the vault's walls, floors, and ceiling as a last guard. The knights of this last guard attack anyone they find in the vault, although they focus their fury on the creature nearest the *Bloodstone*. If necessary, they pursue creatures that attempt to leave the vault with the relic, stopping at nothing to secure the artifact and return it to its proper resting place.

Throughout the battle with the last guard, the spirits of the knights bemoan the fact that their rest has been disturbed, crying out to Iomedae and Arazni alike to grant them peace. The heroes can attempt to Perform Funeral Rites to lay the spirits to rest. Once the heroes have 4 Funeraly Successes, the last guard dissipates.

PERFORM FUNERARY RITES ◆◆

AUDITORY | CONCENTRATE | LINGUISTIC

You calm the spirits of the last guard by reciting prayers for the dead. Attempt a DC 36 Arazni Lore or Iomedae Lore check, a DC 43 Deception check, a DC 40 Performance check, or a DC 38 Religion check.

Critical Success The last guard becomes stunned 3, and the heroes gain 2 Funeraly Successes.

Success The last guard becomes stunned 1, and the heroes gain 1 Funeraly Success.

Failure The last guard is unaffected.

Critical Failure The last guard is unaffected, and the heroes lose 1 Funeraly Success.

LAST GUARD

CREATURE 20

UNCOMMON | GARGANTUAN | INCORPOREAL | SPIRIT | TROOP | UNDEAD | UNHOLY

Pathfinder Book of the Dead 117

Perception +33; darkvision, lifesense 60 feet

Languages Common, Elven, Necril

Skills Acrobatics +38, Stealth +38, Warfare Lore +35

Str -5, **Dex** +10, **Con** +10, **Int** +7, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +6

Battlefield Bound Without a call to war, a last guard can stray only a short distance from the location they failed to defend, typically 120 feet. Some last guards are instead bound to a province, kingdom, or nation, rather than a specific location.

AC 45; **Fort** +34, **Ref** +36, **Will** +31

HP 330 (4 segments), rejuvenation, void healing (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360); **Thresholds** 220 (3 segments), 110 (2 segments); **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Weaknesses** area damage 20, splash damage 10; **Resistances** all damage 10 (except force, *ghost touch*, spirit, or vitality; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Rejuvenation (divine) When a last guard is destroyed, they re-form after 2d4 days within the location they're bound to, fully healed. A last guard can be permanently destroyed and move on to the afterlife only if they successfully defend the location they're bound to from large-scale attack, or fulfill a call to war.

Troop Defenses

Speed fly 40 feet; troop movement

Frightful Battle Cry ◆◆ (auditory, divine, emotion, fear, mental, sonic) The last guards unleash a soul-shaking bellow in unison. All creatures in a 60-foot cone take 7d6 sonic damage (DC 42 basic Will save). Any creature that fails its save is also frightened 3 (or frightened 4 on a critical failure). If the troop occupies 2 or fewer segments, this area decreases to a 30-foot cone.

Ghostly Blades ◆ to ◆◆◆ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect**

The last guards engage in a coordinated attack with their spectral curved blades against each enemy within 5 feet (DC 40 basic Reflex save). The damage depends on the number of actions.

◆ 1d8+2 slashing and 1d8 void damage

◆◆ 2d8+14 slashing and 2d8 void damage

◆◆◆ 3d8+14 slashing and 3d8 void damage

Spectral Charge ◆◆◆ The last guards charge, swarming through their foes. The troop Flies up to double its Speed, dealing 4d8 void damage to each creature whose space it moves through (DC 40 basic Reflex save). Any creature that fails its save is also drained 1 (or drained 2 on a critical failure). The troop can affect each creature only once in a single use of Spectral Charge.

Troop Movement Whenever the troop Strides, they first Form Up as a free action to condense into a 20-foot-by-20-foot area (minus any missing segments), then move up to their Speed. This works just like a Gargantuan creature moving.

Development: If Onturat (in the guise of Addit Kalakin) accompanies the heroes into the Bloodstone Sanctum, he drops his disguise and attacks as soon as they retrieve the *Bloodstone*. This increases the difficulty of the encounter to extreme, but keep in mind that the last guard focuses its attacks primarily on creatures carrying the *Bloodstone* (Onturat included).

Once the PCs recover the *Bloodstone*, defeat Onturat, and destroy, escape from, or put the spirits of the last guard to rest, they can return to Vellumis to check back in with Aylunna Varvatos.

Rewards: Grant the heroes 100 XP for obtaining the *Spleen Bloodstone* of Arazni.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



CHAPTER 2: TO SWEAR THE CRIMSON OATH

When the survivors from Yua's Hope delivered the *Lung Bloodstone* to Aylunna Varvatos (at the end of the "Gravelands Survivors" adventure), at first she didn't understand what the relic was. As she researched the item—following many of the same lines of inquiry Addit Kalakin had when she first began her journey—the *Bloodstone's* significance soon became clear. Fearful that the *Bloodstones* might fall into the hands of those who would use them for evil, Aylunna called upon Beirivelle Starshine for advice. After the heroes investigate Corlach Keep and report back to Vellumis, Aylunna summons them to an emergency conclave at Castle Varitan, with orders to keep their findings secret until a formal debriefing.

When the party arrives in Vellumis, the city's quartermaster arranges replacements for any broken or damaged equipment the heroes might need. Medics treat to their wounds, healing any remaining damage, removing any clumsy, enfeebled, stupefied, or drained

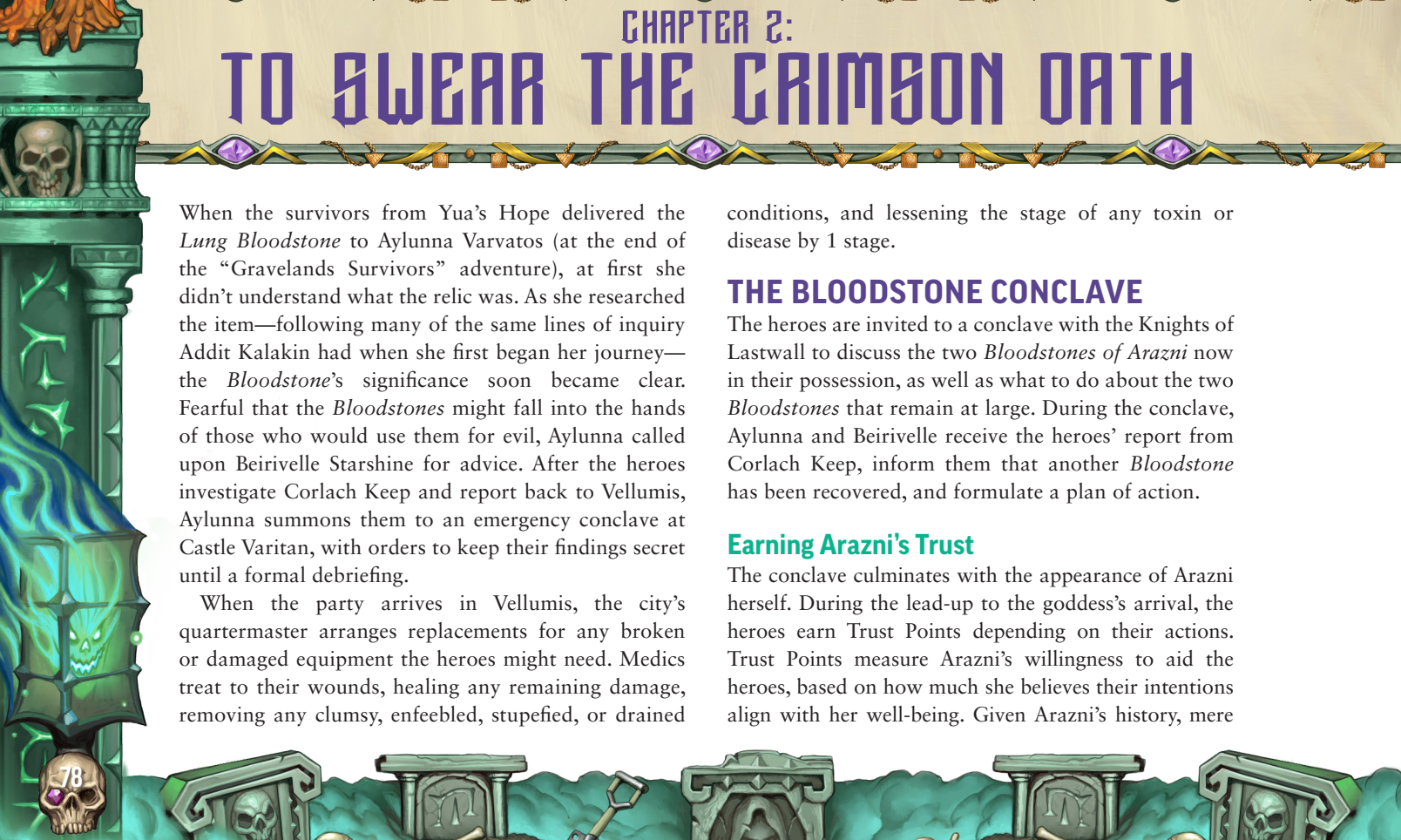
conditions, and lessening the stage of any toxin or disease by 1 stage.

THE BLOODSTONE CONCLAVE

The heroes are invited to a conclave with the Knights of Lastwall to discuss the two *Bloodstones of Arazni* now in their possession, as well as what to do about the two *Bloodstones* that remain at large. During the conclave, Aylunna and Beirivelle receive the heroes' report from Corlach Keep, inform them that another *Bloodstone* has been recovered, and formulate a plan of action.

Earning Arazni's Trust

The conclave culminates with the appearance of Arazni herself. During the lead-up to the goddess's arrival, the heroes earn Trust Points depending on their actions. Trust Points measure Arazni's willingness to aid the heroes, based on how much she believes their intentions align with her well-being. Given Arazni's history, mere



promises or honeyed words are insufficient to sway the goddess. Instead, Arazni focuses on consistency of action.

The adventure calls out points at which the PCs can attempt to earn Arazni's trust. (Because of Arazni's divine nature, she can judge the party's actions even when she's not physically present.) When a character attempts a check that would earn Trust Points, they gain 1 Trust Point on a success and 2 Trust Points on a critical success. On a critical failure, the PCs lose 1 Trust Point. If a hero does something that's an anathema to Arazni, they lose all accumulated Trust Points and can't gain further Trust Points with that particular task. Track these Trust Points to determine how Arazni reacts to the heroes when they meet the goddess (page 82).

Faced with the Unyielding

When the heroes arrive at the meeting with the Knights of Lastwall, read or paraphrase the following.

The war room of Castle Varitan is a hive of activity. While Aylunna Varvatos and Beirivelle Starshine are the most familiar faces, the chamber bustles with dozens of lower-ranking knights and their attendants. As the remaining guests settle in, Aylunna splits her attention between glancing at an hourglass and paging through a journal prepared with bookmarks. On the bench beside her rests a leather carrying case roughly the size of a violin. Occasionally, Aylunna's hand comes to rest on the case, as if to ensure it's still there.

As they settle in, the heroes can speak individually with the other knights in attendance at the conclave. If your group previously played "Gravelands Survivors," the survivors from that adventure—including the players' past characters—are also here. The leather case beside Aylunna contains the *Lung Bloodstone* those survivors recovered from Yua's Hope, although both the survivors and Aylunna wait for the meeting to start to reveal this information.

Once everyone has arrived, Aylunna sets down her journal and starts the meeting. Read or paraphrase the following.

Aylunna Varvatos, looking decidedly more haggard than she was only a few days prior, clears her throat and calls the meeting to order. "It is the 17th of Gozran in the year 4724 Absalom Reckoning. The Knights of Lastwall are gathered to discuss the investigation of Corlach Keep. I, Aylunna Varvatos, call this meeting to order. All in attendance please introduce yourselves."

One by one, the knights in the room introduce themselves and their attendants. The survivors of Yua's Hope, as well as the heroes, are also given the chance to introduce themselves. Once introductions have been made, Aylunna continues with the business of the meeting.

"With the introduction of all present, we move on to the business of the day: receiving reports about our field operations. Let's begin with the light sent to Corlach Keep. Please provide a full report."

At this point, the characters can give an account of their exploration of Corlach Keep. If the players seem unsure of what details to relate, use Aylunna or another NPC to ask probing questions. Once she realized the importance of the recently recovered *Lung Bloodstone*, Aylunna employed magic to monitor the heroes' progress at Corlach Keep and thus is already aware of the discovery of the second *Bloodstone*. If the heroes fail to mention the *Bloodstone* directly, Aylunna reveals the discovery herself and asks the scribe to include it in the meeting's minutes. In either case, the revelation that a *Bloodstone of Arazni* has been recovered sends a noticeable ripple of excitement through the hall.

Trust Points: As the heroes give their report, each character can attempt a DC 39 Performance, Religion, or applicable Lore check to gain Trust Points. If the heroes fail to report finding the *Bloodstone*, they lose all accumulated Trust Points and can't earn Trust Points from this task.

Once the characters finish with their tale, Aylunna speaks again.

"Mark the report of the operation at Corlach Keep complete. My own report regards news from Yua's Hope. Yua's Hope was lost in 4719, when all inhabitants of the town were presumed to have died during the invasion of Lastwall. Recently, however, a group of survivors arrived in Vellumis. Before the invasion, these survivors took refuge in a crypt beneath the town, where their presence went unnoticed by the undead." With this, Aylunna pauses. "Miraculously, an artifact of tremendous importance had been sealed in the crypt along with them, and when the survivors abandoned Yua's Hope, they brought this artifact with them."

Aylunna opens the carrying case beside her and retrieves an object wrapped in cloth. She inhales deeply as if to still her hands, then unwraps the object, revealing a clay jar with the head of a fanged, four-eyed creature carved into its lid.

The assembled knights gasp at the sight of the jar. Once the clamor subsides, Aylunna continues. "One of the Bloodstones of Arazni was also in Yua's Hope. Along with the one recently recovered from Corlach Keep, we now hold half the set. With all four Bloodstones, we would have the power to retake Lastwall."

As murmurs of excitement sweep through the meeting hall, Beirivelle softly interjects. She speaks with a measured tone, choosing each word carefully. "Judging from their recent interest in both Yua's Hope and Corlach Keep, we can only assume that the undead are also aware of the presence of the Bloodstones. As powerful as the Bloodstones would be in our hands, they could just as easily be used for evil. To prevent this, we could simply destroy the relics."

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

Trust Points: The heroes can now weigh in on this debate. As they speak, Beirivelle judges the heroes closely, as she considers them as possible caretakers for the relics. Aylunna has already examined the *Lung Bloodstone* and can explain its properties, although she doesn't know how to destroy it. As the heroes speak, each character can attempt a DC 37 Arazni Lore, DC 40 Performance, or DC 39 Religion check to earn Trust Points. The heroes can advocate for either side of the argument, but if any of them suggest using the *Bloodstones* to control Arazni directly, they lose all accumulated Trust Points, and they can't earn further Trust Points from this task.

Beirivelle looks increasingly uncomfortable as the debate continues. Finally, she speaks up again.

Beirivelle Starshine rises to her feet, pausing a moment before saying, "Perhaps there's a way to speak with Arazni herself. This regards her, after all, and it would be best to confirm her wishes going forward."

If pressed about how she intends to speak with Arazni, Beirivelle insists she can't give more information at this time. Aylunna agrees that the heroes should accompany Beirivelle to consult with Arazni and calls the meeting to end. Assuming the heroes agree to a meeting with Arazni, Beirivelle collects the previously recovered *Lung Bloodstone* from Aylunna. She then gestures for the heroes to follow her.

Trust Points: As they head deeper into Castle Varitan, Beirivelle stresses to the heroes that she's about to reveal one of the Knights' greatest secrets. She asks each character to swear an oath as a knight to ensure their loyalty. The Knights of Lastwall have a variety of oaths, including the Luminous Oath (*Lost Omens Knights of Lastwall* 27), the Crimson Oath (*Lost Omens Knights of Lastwall* 31), and the oath given as recruits (*Lost Omens Knights of Lastwall* 12). Alternatively, a character can swear an oath of their own making, provided the oath is heartfelt and includes a pledge of unswerving loyalty to the Knights of Lastwall. As the heroes swear their oaths, each character can attempt a DC 37 Arazni Lore or Crimson Reclaimers Lore check, or a DC 39 Diplomacy or Religion check, to earn Trust Points. Attempts to Lie or other deceive Beirivelle are possible but extremely difficult (DC 44 or higher), as it's Arazni herself (not Beirivelle) who judges the heroes. If any

hero outright refuses to swear an oath, the heroes lose all accumulated Trust Points and can't earn further Trust Points on this task.

Once the heroes give their oaths, Beirivelle leads the party through a series of little-used passages that honeycomb Castle Varitan. When the group passes through areas that could get them spotted, she asks the heroes to remain as inconspicuous as possible.

Trust Points: As the heroes move through Castle Varitan, each character can attempt a DC 35 Crimson Reclaimers Lore, DC 37 Stealth, or DC 39 Deception, check to earn Trust Points. If any character intentionally draws attention to the group, the heroes lose all accumulated Trust Points and can't earn further Trust Points on this task.

Eventually, Beirivelle leads the heroes to the door of a smaller meeting hall used by one of the Knights' most militant orders, the Crimson Reclaimers.

Beirivelle raps on the stout wooden door to announce the group's arrival. A moment later, the hard face of Clarethe Iomedar appears in the doorway. Hanging on the wall behind her is a tapestry woven with the symbol of the Crimson Reclaimers, a blood-red sword driven through the top of a grinning skull. Beneath this image is a second symbol: a rapier surrounded by the petals of the lotus flower.

Beirivelle hesitates a moment before saying, "We need to meet with Arazni,"

Clarethe scowls. "I don't know anything about that," she snaps. Before she can close the door, however, Beirivelle deftly slips a foot across the chamber's threshold.

"Please," Beirivelle continues. "This is a matter that concerns her greatly. At least let us in so we don't have this discussion in the hallway!"

Clarethe's eyes narrow with suspicion, but eventually she retreats into the room, leaving the door open a shoulder's width behind her.

Clarethe Iomedar (nonbinary human vindicator 15) is the leader of the Crimson Reclaimers and the first person to swear the Crimson Oath. Aylunna specifically decided to keep Clarethe in the dark about the *Bloodstone* conclave, as she knew the knight's near-fanatical devotion to Arazni would cloud her judgment about what to do about the newly recovered artifacts. Clarethe is famous among the Knights of Lastwall and instantly recognizable by the heroes. Aylunna's judgment about Clarethe is astute: she's more loyal to Arazni than she is to the Knights of Lastwall. The second image on the tapestry is a



variation on Arazni's religious symbol and identifiable by anyone trained in Arazni Lore or who succeeds at a DC 25 Religion check.

Once Beirivelle and the heroes enter the meeting room, continue with the following.

"I should've known you'd figure it out," Clarethe says. "How long did it take you?"

Beirivelle smiles. "I suspected the Crimson Oath was sworn to Arazni the moment I first heard it," she says. "But it took me much longer to confirm my suspicions." She shakes her head. "Time is short. You of all people must understand the danger Arazni faces now. Tar-Baphon's forces seek her Bloodstones as we speak. If I know anything about Arazni, she'd want to be consulted."

Clarethe's confirmation that the Crimson Reclaimers have a connection to Arazni is unprecedented. While knights who swear the Crimson Oath often feel an innate connection to Arazni, the fact that the oath's power stems directly from the goddess is the order's most guarded secret. Beirivelle is clearly surprised by Clarethe's frank admission, but she allows the knight to speak.

Clarethe's voice is calm but commanding. "Before I call her here," she says, "I need to understand what's happening. She doesn't like to be called upon by mortals, particularly the Knights of Lastwall. The last time the Knights summoned Arazni, the Whispering Tyrant slew her." She casts a reproachful glance at Beirivelle. "I won't call her here simply on a whim."

Technically, Clarethe is referring to the Knights of Ozem, who initially called upon Arazni when she was still the herald of Aroden. Rather than asking Arazni to fight with them in the Shining Crusade, the knights bound her against her will. She died still bound to the knights, and even when the Knights of Ozem reclaimed her body, they failed to keep her safe. Geb stole her corpse under their watch, and a group of corrupted knights (Seldeg Bhedlis among them) became her captors when she was unwillingly transformed into a lich. As a result, Clarethe shares much of the disdain Arazni feels toward the Knights of Lastwall, seeing them as the same organization as the Knights of Ozem, but under a new name.

As one of the leaders of the Knights of Lastwall, Beirivelle realizes her presence during the meeting with Clarethe will be a distraction. She relinquishes the *Lung Bloodstone* to the characters and asks them to continue the negotiation on her behalf. From here on, the heroes and Clarethe are alone.

Trust Points: How the heroes interact with Clarethe influences Arazni's view of them. Each hero can attempt a DC 36 Arazni Lore or Crimson Reclaimers Lore, a

DC 38 Diplomacy, or a DC 40 Religion check to prove their good intentions to Clarethe and convince her to call upon Arazni. If the heroes stress the danger the current situation poses to Arazni, they receive a +2 circumstance bonus to their check. Deceiving Clarethe is difficult but possible with a DC 44 Deception check to Lie (again, it's Arazni herself the PC is trying to deceive). If any PC threatens the *Bloodstones* in an attempt to force Clarethe's hand, the heroes lose all accumulated Trust Points and can't earn further Trust Points on this task. If the heroes reveal they already have two *Bloodstones* in their possession, Clarethe is shocked by the revelation. She decides to call upon Arazni, regardless of the number of Trust Points the characters earn.

If the heroes earn at least 1 Trust Point, or once they reveal the *Bloodstones*, Clarethe moves to the chamber's fireplace, where a red and purple flower rests in a vase atop the mantle. The flower is similar in appearance to the lotus that decorates the banner hanging on the chamber's wall. After whispering a soft prayer to Arazni, Clarethe crushes the flower's petals in her hand. As she does, a ripple of divine energy washes over the room. Read or paraphrase the following.

As Clarethe crushes the flower, a palpable feeling of warmth spreads throughout the chamber. Moments later, droplets of amber appear on the walls, swelling into rivulets that run down to the floor. A noted silence fills the space, its pressure building with each passing moment. When the feeling passes, a figure stands in the center of the room.

Arazni is a woman of slightly below average height with light gray skin. Her dark, flowing hair is mostly hidden by the hood of her cloak, but the look of dissatisfaction on her face is clear. Her features soften almost imperceptibly when her gaze meets Clarethe.

"What is the meaning of this summons, little sibling?" The goddess asks. "I had hoped my wish to remain undisturbed was clear."

Clarethe nods in understanding but quickly speaks. "I've been informed of a plot against you. Your Bloodstones have been found again—"

"Found?" Arazni interrupts. "They're in this very room, are they not?"

"Yes, they are." Clarethe pauses for the barest second before committing to her words. "And we're giving them over to you."

Attempt a secret DC 36 Perception check to Sense Motive for all heroes. On a success, the characters realize that Arazni is shocked but pleased by this offer. They also recognize that withdrawing the offer now would surely incur the goddess's wrath. If a hero contradicts Clarethe's offer to give Arazni the *Bloodstones*, Arazni scoffs with disappointment, and the heroes lose 4 Trust Points.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX



Whether or not the heroes agree to return the *Bloodstones*, Arazni addresses the characters directly.

"Speak of this plot against me. Few things in the mortal world can harm me now, and I wish for that to remain so."

At this point, the heroes have a chance to share with Arazni what they've learned about the *Bloodstones*, and in doing so, gain her trust further. Arazni speaks openly with the heroes, freely sharing the information she knows about the *Bloodstones* and her own history. She's already aware Seldeg Bhedlis has taken up residence at Hammer Rock and suspects the graveknight is working to reassert control over her, but she remains unaware of the details.

Examples of Arazni's responses to the heroes' questions or proposals are provided below.

What can you tell us about the *Bloodstones*? "I believe you already know the broad strokes. They're pieces of my mortal body, torn from me when Geb performed his foul corruption. My divine form prevents me from touching the *Bloodstones* unless they're willingly given to me. Since Clarethe has already offered the two you have in your possession, I will happily take them. However, if you intend to gather the remaining two *Bloodstones*, I will permit you to take one of these *Bloodstones* with you. Is this a fair agreement?"

What can you tell us about Seldeg Bhedlis? Arazni sneers. "A renegade, quisling, and apostate! I knew him prior to what he is now. Once, he was a man of Ozem, much like these knights who surround us now. He journeyed to Geb under the vain delusion he could take down that state from within. Alas, he found its decadence too enticing, and all those years of self-restraint unraveled. Seldeg betrayed not only himself, but the knights who accompanied him. He chose undeath over divine judgment and was assigned to be my bodyguard.

"When I sought my freedom, Seldeg fell from Geb's good graces. He remained behind while my other bodyguards hunted me, and when I disposed of them, Seldeg was forced to reckon with Geb's fury. He has since fled here to Lastwall. Recently, he has taken up residence in the former crusader stronghold known as Hammer Rock. I believe he seeks to control me once again, but beyond that I know little.

"Take a thousand years of military training, expertise in spycraft, and stuff it inside the vessel of an embittered man and you've got... *him*. Sadly, true death is not a mercy that can be granted to Seldeg. Unless you know a way to destroy a graveknight's armor."

What would you like to have happen with the *Bloodstones*? "I want them returned to me! Their creation was a vile act from the beginning. The Knights of Lastwall might believe the *Bloodstones* are a tool to use against their enemies, but anyone who thinks of keeping them is my enemy, regardless of their intentions.

So long as the *Bloodstones* exist, I will never truly be free. If you can't return the *Bloodstones* to me, destroy them. However, I would much prefer to savor that act myself, as doing so will also destroy that which keeps me bound to those like Seldeg."

Do you know where the other *Bloodstones* are? Arazni shakes her head. "Most likely in some vault or safe house established by the Crimson Keepers. But this information is hidden, even from me."

Who are the Crimson Keepers? "A would-be secret order dedicated to keeping me bound to them. They were once a faction within the Knights of Ozem but have since been absorbed into the Church of Iomedae. They're no allies of mine!" After this outburst, Arazni shares the information about the Crimson Keepers presented in the introduction to this anthology.

Can't you handle this yourself? Arazni shakes her head. "Would that I could. Ascension brings many powers, but it has its limitations. Some gods might be able to meddle in mortal affairs as they choose, but when it comes to the *Bloodstones*, I must rely on others to secure my freedom."

Arazni's Trust: The heroes have a final chance to win Arazni's trust. As they speak with her, each hero can attempt a DC 36 Arazni Lore, DC 38 Religion, or a DC 40 Diplomacy check. During their exploration of Corlach Keep, the PCs may have learned from the bonetaker Onturat of Seldeg's plans, including his intention to swap the fate of Arazni with that of Iomedae. If the PCs share this information with Arazni, they receive a +1 circumstance bonus to their checks to earn the goddess's trust. During the meeting, if a hero commits an act that's anathema to Arazni (such as insulting her), the heroes lose all accumulated Trust Points, and she inflicts that character with her moderate curse (see Arazni's Divine Intercessions). This curse can't be removed until the transgressor completes an *atone* ritual or with similarly powerful magic.

How Arazni leaves the meeting with the heroes depends on how many Trust Points the characters have accumulated to this point. These benefits are cumulative; for instance, earning 36+ Trust Points gains the heroes her minor, moderate, and major boons (see Arazni's Divine Intercessions).

0–11 Trust Points: Arazni believes the heroes are little better than the Knights of Ozem. She suspects they don't see her as a being with her own agency and are only interested in using her as a tool. She's dismissive of the PCs and, while she does nothing to interfere with their mission, refuses to offer them aid for the task ahead.

12–23 Trust Points: Arazni is wary of the heroes but believes she can trust them for this task. She grants all heroes her minor boon.

24–35 Trust Points: Arazni is certain the heroes will respect her agency and believes they can be long-term

allies. She grants the heroes her moderate boon, which takes the form of *Arazni's Freedom*, a +3 *major striking holy shifting rapier* made of her solidified blood.

36+ Trust Points: Arazni regards the heroes as foolish mortals ignorant of what their promise of loyalty to her actually means. All the same, she grants the heroes her major boon.

Treasure: In addition to any boons Arazni grants the heroes, Clarethe offers the party a combination of the Crimson Reclaimers' coffers and her own personal wealth to aid them in the task ahead. She provides the heroes with a vial of *antimagic oil*, a set of *greater marvelous medicines*, a pair of *major obsidian goggles*, four *potions of undetectability*, a *scroll of revival*, a *wand of execute* (9th rank), a *wand of moment of renewal*, and four true elixirs of life. If the PCs gained 24 Trust Points or more, she also gives the PCs her personal shield *Fall from Grace*, which is a *supreme reinforcing cold iron shield*.

Reward: Award the heroes 100 XP for meeting with Arazni. Additionally, reward the heroes 8 XP for every Trust Point they earn.

Development: Before the party departs, Clarethe offers the heroes an opportunity to swear the Crimson Oath with her, although she pointedly withholds this offer from any PC who insulted Arazni during their meeting. If the heroes aren't already knight reclaimers and swear the oath, they gain the Knight Reclaimant Dedication feat (*Lost Omens Character Guide* 95), provided they meet the feat's prerequisites. With the divine grace of Arazni, a hero can retrain any class feats or skill feats into Knight Reclaimant archetype feats without needing to spend any downtime or other resources. Heroes that were already Knight Reclaimants instead gain Invoke the Crimson Oath (*Lost Omens Character Guide* 95) or The Tyrant Falls! (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Knights of Lastwall* 77) as a bonus feat.

It's possible that one or more PCs—even those who are otherwise well intentioned—have no interest in helping Arazni. Though her former oppressors, including Tar-Baphon, Geb, and Seldeg Bhedlis, are generally regarded as villains, Arazni's own morality isn't unassailable. During her time as the queen of Geb, Arazni committed acts that most would regard as irredeemably evil, and while she took these actions against her will, she's never made a full accounting for them. That said, even PCs reluctant to ally with Arazni should at least see the value in joining forces with her temporarily, without becoming her full-throated champions. If successful, Seldeg's ritual will have catastrophic repercussions across Golarion, making Arazni's past crimes seem insignificant in comparison. Aylunna, Beirivelle, or even Clarethe can impress the importance of recovering the *Bloodstones* from Seldeg, even if the PCs aren't interested in helping Arazni directly.

ARAZNI'S DIVINE INTERCESSIONS

While Arazni generally has little regard for those who choose to worship her as a god, when the Unyielding makes her presence felt on Golarion, both her favor and her wrath can be powerful indeed.

The boons and curses Arazni is most likely to grant the PCs during the adventure appear below. More information about Arazni, as well as a full description of her divine intercessions, can be found in *Pathfinder Lost Omens Divine Mysteries*.

Boons

Minor Boon: Once, when you fail a saving throw against an effect that would compel you to take some action against your will, you critically succeed instead. Arazni typically grants this boon for consequential actions or particularly egregious violations of free will.

Moderate Boon: Blood from your wounds forms into armor or a piece of equipment you need. If what you need most is information, the blood forms letters spelling out that information.

Major Boon: Upon death, you return to life with the effects of a critical success on a *resurrect* ritual to enact vengeance against your killers. When you successfully achieve vengeance, abandon your vengeance for other pursuits, or fail outright, you crumble to scarlet dust.

Curses

Moderate Curse: Creatures weaker than you gain a status bonus on all attack rolls against you equal to your difference in levels, to a maximum of +4. Whenever you are damaged by such a creature, you take persistent bleed damage equal to twice the difference between your levels (no maximum).

CHASING THE BLOODSTONES

During his time as a Knight of Ozem, Seldeg Bhedlis worked primarily as a scout and infiltrator. In the intervening centuries, he's had time to refine his skills even further. As soon as he learned that the *Bloodstones of Arazni* had survived Tar-Baphon's attack on Lastwall, Seldeg dispatched his minions to gather information about the artifacts' whereabouts. While he's already aware that the *Bloodstones* secured at Yua's Hope and Corlach Keep have slipped from his grasp, he remains hopeful his plan to swap the fates of Arazni and Iomedae can still succeed.

Relying on the information he extracted from the Iomedean scholar Addit Kalakin, Seldeg believes he knows the locations of the two remaining *Bloodstones*. If Addit's memories are correct, one of the *Bloodstones* remains at Dortrot Ranch, while the other is secured in a chapel at Castle Firrine. Aylunna Varvatos identified these locations to the heroes during their initial meeting with her, and if necessary, she can remind them that they're likely Seldeg's next targets.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



DORTROT RANCH
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

The heroes can investigate Dortrot Ranch and Castle Firrine as they see fit. Both locations lie near the Gravelands' northern border. Dortrot Ranch is over 100 miles north of Vellumis, while Castle Firrine is nearly 300 miles to the northwest. A group with a minimum Speed of 25 feet can travel from Vellumis to Dortrot Ranch in 6 days, while travel to Castle Firrine takes 15 days. Travel between Castle Firrine and Dortrot Ranch takes 10 days. Travel to Hammer Rock, where Seldeg plans to enact his ritual, takes 9 days from Vellumis, 5 days from Castle Firrine, and 5 days from Dortrot Ranch. Magic and similar abilities, of course, can reduce these travel times. Unless the GM wishes to introduce additional encounters as the PCs travel between these sites, any undead or other creatures the PCs meet along the way are easily avoided or dispatched.

Unbeknownst to the heroes, Seldeg doesn't need all four of the *Bloodstones* to complete his ritual. In fact, even one *Bloodstone* is unnecessary, although each of the artifacts Seldeg possesses will make the heroes' job of foiling his plot more difficult when they face him during the adventure's climax at Hammer Rock (see 98). Provided the PCs don't linger at any particular location, they should be able to snatch both remaining *Bloodstones* from the clutches of Seldeg's minions before the graveknight completes his ritual. Assume that

any *Bloodstones* the heroes don't retrieve are delivered to Seldeg before the party arrives at Hammer Rock.

Dortrot Ranch

As the heroes approach Dortrot Ranch, they spot **Cley Fanson** (ornery male human farmer 8) traveling on horseback in the opposite direction. Gruff at the best of times, today Cley is in a particularly foul mood. He explains he was headed to Dortrot Ranch to buy a horse but couldn't get past the undead assembled in the hills outside the ranch. He warns the heroes that the way ahead is blocked with "more of those forsaken rotters than there are weeds in my field." Cley confirms the undead seemed to have caught the ranch by surprise, and that the ranchers were scrambling to prepare a defense when he retreated.

Once the heroes are within a mile of Dortrot Ranch, the air fills with the stench of death. Each character must attempt a DC 44 Fortitude saving throw. This effect has the olfactory trait.

Critical Success The character is unaffected.

Success The target takes a -1 status penalty to Perception and initiative while within 1 mile of Dortrot Ranch.

Failure The target is sickened 1 and can't reduce its sickened condition while in the area.

Critical Failure The target is sickened 2 and can't reduce its sickened condition while in the area.

B1. Dortrot Pasture

Moderate 19

On the outskirts of the ranch, the source of the sickening stench becomes apparent. Amassed outside the ranch's gate is a force of several dozen zombies, ghouls, and other undead, all mounted on horseback. A pair of zombies wearing breastplates marked with the symbols of fallen Lastwall knights leads the force. Unless the heroes go out of their way to make their presence known, the undead seem to have their sights set on the ranch. A character who succeeds at a DC 35 Warfare Lore check realizes that an attack on Dortrot Ranch is imminent.

Use the map on page 84 for this encounter. If additional space is needed, *Pathfinder Flip-Mat Classics: Hill Country*, *Pathfinder Flip-Tiles: Wilderness Starter Set*, or *Pathfinder Flip-Mat: Forest Multi-Pack* provide options for expanding the encounter.

Creatures: After learning one of the *Bloodstones of Arazni* was secured at Dortrot Ranch, Seldeg Bhedlis dispatched one of his minions, the necromancer **Brumesgarth** (cautious male runecarved lich 19), to retrieve it. Preferring to search for the artifact at his leisure rather than risk an infiltration, Brumesgarth set about raising an army of undead to wipe out the ranchers. The undead currently at the gate represent the vanguard of Brumesgarth's forces, which he plans to use to test the ranch's defenses. The undead charge the gate moments after the party arrives but quickly turn their attention to the heroes once they reveal themselves. Brumesgarth and the remainder of his forces are waiting in the surrounding hills; if the heroes choose to stay and defend Dortrot Ranch, they will face these undead later in the adventure (Undead Extermination Crew 86).

RAISED CAVALRY

CREATURE 19

Page 118

Initiative Perception +32

ZOMBIE DESECRATORS (2)

CREATURE 17

UNCOMMON MEDIUM MINDLESS UNDEAD UNHOLY ZOMBIE

Perception +23; darkvision

Skills Athletics +35

Str +9, **Dex** -2, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -2

Items breastplate, +2 greater striking unholy greatsword

AC 40; **Fort** +35, **Ref** +23, **Will** +29

HP 395, void healing (*Monster Core* 360); **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** slashing 15, vitality 15

Reactive Strike ⚡ (*Monster Core* 359)

Speed 25 feet

Melee ⚔ *greatsword* +31 (magical, unholy, versatile P), **Damage** 3d12+16 slashing plus 1d4 spirit

Trudge ⚡⚡ The zombie desecrator moves mindlessly forward without fear of pain. It Strides twice, ignoring any difficult terrain during its movement. At the end of its movement,

the zombie takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage for each square of difficult terrain it entered while Trudging.

Development: Once the initial undead force is defeated, the heroes hear a commotion from Dortrot Ranch as the ranchers shout at them to get inside the walls. Clearing aside the wagons they used to reinforce the entry, the ranchers rush the heroes inside and rebuild the barricade behind them. Depending on the time of day the heroes arrived at the ranch, they should have several hours before nightfall, when Brumesgarth launches his attack in earnest (Undead Extermination Crew 86). Until then, the heroes can talk with the ranchers and convince them to entrust the party with the *Bloodstone* that's currently in the ranchers' care (The Dortrot Bloodstone 86).

B2. Dortrot Palisade

Logs as wide as an orc's shoulders and several times taller form a palisade around Dortrot Ranch. The tips of the logs have been sharpened into massive spikes, atop which are impaled the desiccated remains of various undead. On the wall's western arc, a barricade blocks the entrance to the ranch.

The palisade is 15 feet tall and 5 feet wide. Each square has Hardness 10, 40 HP, and BT 20. Between the wall and the firebreak (area B3) are two guard stations. One is a tower constructed from sturdy beams, while the other is little more than a raised deck with chairs, tables, and a canopy for keeping the sun away. Stacked beside the canopied rest area is a small pyramid of provisions, water barrels, and other supplies.

B3. Firebreak

Dortrot Ranch survived several waves of wildfires a few years back, thanks in large part to the firebreak dug behind the ranch's palisade. While these days undead pose a greater threat to the ranch than fires, the ditch's usefulness remains, as mindless undead that breach the palisade inevitably tumble into the firebreak. The firebreak is 15 feet wide and 10 feet deep.

Stone columns rise from the firebreak directly opposite the gate. Planks of wood can be placed over the columns to form an impromptu bridge sturdy enough for wagons to drive over.

B4. Dortrot Compound

At the heart of Dortrot Ranch are the buildings where its inhabitants live. Most are constructed from stone, and many bear scorch marks from previous wildfires. The only recent construction is the ranch's kitchen, which is made of wood and stands apart from the other structures. A struggling vegetable garden occupies a plot of land near the kitchen. The largest structure belongs to Hendle Dortrot, the ranch's current owner, but other residents also have homes here.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



The compound features two wells, although only the one near the kitchen provides water. The well next to Hendle's house purportedly ran dry three generations ago. In truth, this well was never functional; at its bottom lies a vault in which the Crimson Keepers secured the *Liver Bloodstone of Arazni*. Of all the inhabitants of Dortrot Ranch, only Hendle is aware of the vault's existence, and even he has never inspected the vault himself. Unlike the vault beneath Corlach Keep, any defenses that once secured the vault at the bottom of the well have long since failed. If the heroes discover the location of the vault, retrieving the *Bloodstone* should be little trouble.

Beyond the buildings shown on the map are additional living quarters and outbuildings. While the ranchers have learned to make do with what food they can grow themselves, they often resort to slaughtering horses and making jerky. A slaughterhouse, tanning shed, and curing chamber stand as far from the ranchers' homes as possible.

The Dortrot Bloodstone

Dortrot Ranch is a community of rugged survivalists who have refused to surrender their land to the undead. After providing mounts for the Knights of Lastwall (and before them, the Knights of Ozem) for generations, today the ranch is led by the family's last surviving member, **Hendle Dortrot** (stubborn male human rancher 14). Under Hendle's determined leadership, the ranchers have managed to keep the undead of the Gravelands at bay, although years spent surrounded by undead have tested the ranchers' endurance to the breaking point.

The heroes are met at the gate by a handful of ranchers, including **Deelgeen** (devoted female halfling chaplain 12), **Pigeon Brushmetal** (resourceful female dromaar farmhand 6), and **Advenrus Morilla** (nervous male human horse trainer 4). While Deelgeen tends to any injuries the heroes have, Pigeon offers the party scarves scented with ginger water. The scarves are similar to ones all the ranchers wear and allow the heroes to recover from the sickened condition imposed by the scent of death that hangs over the ranch. While Deelgeen works, the heroes notice heavy burn scars on her forearms: reminders of when the chaplain nearly lost her life defending the ranch from a wildfire 5 years ago.

If asked about the undead that attacked the ranch, Advenrus sighs. "It didn't used to be like this. Before things went bad and the fires happened, this was good, horse-rearing land. Now there aren't many living people left, and it seems like attacks from the undead come more frequent. I keep thinking we can't hold on much longer, but Hendle says the Dortrots have been here for 11 generations, and no undead are going to drive us away."

Before long, Hendle himself arrives to welcome the heroes. He is a short human man in his late 60s, and is stubborn as a crooked nail that refuses to be hammered down or pried loose from its board. He's glad to offer the

heroes a chance to rest at the ranch but doesn't argue if they decide to move on. "It's safer here," he shrugs, "but it looks you lot can handle yourselves."

Hendle immediately becomes suspicious if asked about the *Bloodstone*. At first, Hendle claims not to have heard of the artifact, but a character who succeeds at a DC 35 Perception check to Sense Motive recognizes that the rancher knows more than he lets on. If pressed, Hendle eventually admits that the *Bloodstone* is at the ranch. ("No point hiding the truth," he says, "since you already know it.") Convincing Hendle to give up the artifact is more difficult. Hendle explains the Dortrots originally made a deal with the Crimson Keepers to keep the *Bloodstone* in exchange for becoming the exclusive horse traders for the Knights of Ozem. Hendle admits the deal is meaningless now, but he's a man of his word and sees safeguarding the *Bloodstone* as his way of carrying on his family's legacy.

Convincing Hendle to entrust the heroes with the *Bloodstone* requires a successful DC 37 Diplomacy check to Make a Request. Alternatively, a hero can attempt a DC 37 Arazni Lore or DC 39 Religion check to impress upon Hendle the danger Arazni—and the Gravelands as a whole—would face if the *Bloodstone* were to fall into the hands of the undead. On a success, Hendle admits the *Bloodstone* is locked inside a vault at the bottom of the ranch's dried-up well (described in area B4). On a failed check, Hendle refuses to give up the *Bloodstone*, even under pain of death. Unless the heroes chose to take the artifact by force, the only way they can convince Hendle to relinquish the *Bloodstone* is to help him defend the ranch against Brumesgarth's army (see Undead Extermination Crew below).

Undead Extermination Crew

If the heroes convince Hendle to give them the *Bloodstone*, they're free to leave the ranch at any time. However, make it clear to the players that abandoning the ranchers to Brumesgarth and his army is most likely a death sentence. The characters can press on if they believe their window to stop Seldeg is closing, but if they return to Dortrot Ranch later in the adventure, they find the ranch destroyed and all the ranchers either dead or missing.

Whether the heroes help defend the ranch out of a sense of justice or to prove to Hendle they can be trusted with the *Bloodstone*, Hendle outlines what he knows about the undead the ranch now faces. Read or paraphrase the following.

"I'm guessing we have until nightfall before they attack in earnest. They're all out in the hills beyond the pasture. You can smell them on the wind when it's blowing right. I've heard some wailing as well—likely banshees. It's up to you if you want to ride out to meet them or lure them inside the walls. I trust you to be the experts here. Just let me and the rest know what you need."

Brumesgarth, the runecarved lich commanding the forces in the hills, has ordered the undead to attack the ranch in waves, starting at nightfall. Until then, the heroes can prepare Dortrot Ranch for the attack by taking the Prepare the Defenses activity to earn Preparation Points (PP). Alternatively, the heroes can use any abilities at their disposal that can be completed in the time available, such as setting snares or casting rituals. Such actions typically earn the party 1 PP, or 2 PP if you feel the action is particularly helpful.

PREPARE THE DEFENSES

EXPLORATION

You bolster Dortrot Ranch's defenses against the impending attack. Attempt a DC 36 Athletics, Crafting, or Warfare Lore check to reinforce the gate or palisade, a DC 38 Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion check to cleanse the area of necromantic energy, or a DC 40 Diplomacy, Intimidation, or Performance check to coordinate the ranchers' efforts or bolster their resolve.

Critical Success The heroes gain 2 Preparation Points.

Success The heroes gain 1 Preparation Point.

Failure The heroes gain no Preparation Points.

Critical Failure The heroes lose 1 Preparation Point.

6+ PP Dortrot Ranch is as solid as a fortress, and the ranchers are prepared to repel the undead. The heroes gain a +3 circumstance bonus to initiative during the first wave, a +2 circumstance bonus to initiative during the second wave, and a +1 circumstance bonus to initiative in the final wave.

4-3 PP The ranch's defenses are sound. The heroes gain a +1 circumstance bonus to initiative during the first wave.

2-1 PP The defenses are haphazard, and the ranchers' morale is poor.

0 PP The ranchers are still scrambling to prepare the defenses when the undead arrive. The heroes take a -1 circumstance penalty to initiative during the first wave.

As Hendle predicted, Brumesgarth launches his assault once night falls. The heroes can choose where to make their stand before the first wave begins.

Wave 1: The Banshees Moderate 19

As the sunset fades to night, a chorus of wails echoes through the hills. The ranchers stand ready but look to the PCs to lead the defense. Moments later, the first wave of Brumesgarth's undead forces appears on the horizon.

Creatures: The first wave of attacks is a raised cavalry led by a pair of banshees. During the battle, alternate banshees use their Wail ability each round, employing the 3-action version of that ability to overcome any *silence* spells in the area. The banshee who doesn't Wail uses Terrifying Touch on creatures that aren't already frightened.

BANSHEES (2) CREATURE 17

Pathfinder Monster Core 37

Initiative Perception +32

RAISED CAVALRY CREATURE 19

Page 118

Initiative Perception +32

Development: After defeating the banshees and raised cavalry, the heroes have 10 minutes to rest before the next wave of undead appears.

Wave 2: Focused Forces Moderate 19

The defenders have barely caught their breath when the staccato beat of hooves heralds the next wave of undead.

Creatures: The second wave includes another raised cavalry. The splinter officer leading the charge uses Raise Defenses, Rally the Rabble, and Synchronized Step to maximize the effectiveness of the cavalry, engaging in melee only if forced to do so.

RAISED CALVARY CREATURE 19

Page 118

Initiative Perception +32

SPLINTER OFFICER CREATURE 19

Page 119

Initiative Perception +35

Development: After the heroes defeat the raised calvary and splinter officer, they have 10 minutes to rest before the next wave arrives.

Wave 3: That's Enough! Severe 19

If the party repels the first two waves of undead, Brumesgarth takes matters into his own hands, resolving to wipe the heroes from the Universe for good.

Creatures: Brumesgarth approaches the gate accompanied by a cadre of four zombie desecrators. Brumesgarth begins the encounter by using his wand to create a *wall of force*, harrying the heroes with spells from a distance while allowing his zombies to take the brunt of melee attacks.

BRUMESGARTH CREATURE 19

UNIQUE MEDIUM UNDEAD UNHOLY

Variant runecarved lich (*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 122)

Perception +32; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Chthonian, Diabolic, Draconic, Empyrean, Necril, Sakvroth

Skills Arcana +34, Crafting +38 (can craft magic items), Deception +35, Diplomacy +35, Intimidation +37, Occultism +36, Religion +34, Stealth +33

Str +5, **Dex** +6, **Con** +4, **Int** +7, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +10

Items +2 greater striking grievous flail, wand of shardstorm (7th), wand of wall of force

Stored Items Brumesgarth can store items inside his body, as detailed below. Brumesgarth can Interact to remove or store an item. If Brumesgarth's body is destroyed, any stored items appear among his bones.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX



CASTLE FIRRINE
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

Arm Wands (extradimensional) Brumesgarth can store up to two wands in the radius and ulna of one of his arms. These wands can be used as if wielded, and they can't be disarmed. If an arm wand is overcharged, Brumesgarth takes 20 damage if the wand is broken or 40 damage if it's destroyed.

Spell Tome Brumesgarth has a carefully crafted tome, filled with magical power, placed inside his ribcage. This tome can hold up to three spells stolen by the Spellstealing Counter ability.

Stored Weapon (extradimensional) Brumesgarth can store a single one-handed weapon of 1 Bulk or less, linked to special runes carved into the bones of one of his arms. Brumesgarth has the flail listed in his items. A weapon Brumesgarth wields deals additional damage equal to half the number of dice from his Hand strike.

AC 42; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +33, **Will** +36; +1 status to all saves vs. vitality

HP 330, void healing (Monster Core 360); **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 60 feet, DC 38 (Monster Core 359)

Rejuvenation (arcane) When Brumesgarth is destroyed, his soul immediately transfers to his *soul cage*. Brumesgarth can be permanently destroyed only if his *soul cage* is found and destroyed.

Spellstealing Counter ⤵ (occult) **Trigger** A creature Brumesgarth can see Casts a Spell; **Requirements** Brumesgarth has fewer than three spells stored in his spell tome; **Effect** Brumesgarth expends a spell slot of the same rank as the spell being cast to counter the triggering creature's casting. Brumesgarth loses his spell slot as if he had cast the triggering spell. Brumesgarth then attempts to counteract the triggering spell (counteract modifier +35). If successful, the spell is countered and added to Brumesgarth's spell tome.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ✦ flail +34 (disarm, magical, sweep, trip), **Damage** 3d6+13 bludgeoning plus 3d8 void

Melee ✦ hand +31 (finesse, magical), **Damage** 6d8 void

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 45, attack +37; **9th** *overwhelming presence, phantasmagoria, wails of the damned* (3 slots); **8th** *disappearance, hidden mind, quandary* (3 slots); **7th** *duplicate foe, energy aegis, mask of terror* (3 slots); **6th** *spellwrack, spirit blast, teleport* (3 slots); **5th** *false vision, scouting eye, slither* (3 slots); **4th** *confusion, fly, translocate* (3 slots); **3rd** *hypercognition, mind reading, slow* (3 slots); **2nd** *false vitality, see the unseen, shatter* (3 slots); **1st** *alarm, illusory disguise, phantasmal minion* (3 slots); **Cantrips (9th)** *daze, detect magic, figment, prestidigitation, telekinetic hand*

Consult the Text ✦ (manipulate) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** Brumesgarth causes the pages of his spell tome to flip open, revealing an occult spell of 9th rank or lower



of his choice. For the remainder of the day, Brumesgarth can cast that spell as if it were one of his spells known for every rank of its base rank up to 9th.

Drain Spell Tome ♦ **Effect** Brumesgarth draws upon the magic stored in his spell tome to cast one of the spells he has countered. This spell is the same rank as the one countered, but it uses Brumesgarth's spell DC and spell attack. Casting a spell in this way removes it from the spell tome.

Steady Spellcasting If a reaction would disrupt Brumesgarth's spellcasting action, he attempts a DC 15 flat check. On a success, the action isn't disrupted.

Summon Weapon ♦ **Requirements** Brumesgarth has a stored weapon in his arm and has that hand free; **Effect** Brumesgarth summons his stored weapon into that arm's hand.

ZOMBIE DESECRATORS (4)

CREATURE 17

Page 85

Initiative Perception +23

Development: With the defeat of Brumesgarth's army, the heroes have eliminated the threat to Dortrot Ranch. Unfortunately, Brumesgarth's *soul cage* is currently in the possession of Seldeg Bhedlis, who took the *soul cage* to ensure the lich's loyalty. Unless they have some way to prevent Brumesgarth from Rejuvenating, the heroes will face the lich again later in the adventure, when they attempt to foil Seldeg's ritual at Hammer Rock.

If Hendle hasn't already revealed the *Liver Bloodstone's* location, he does so now, entrusting its care to the party. If the heroes haven't yet retrieved the *Heart Bloodstone*, they can now travel to Castle Firrine. Alternatively, they can head directly to Hammer Rock.

Reward: If the heroes stayed to defend Dortrot Ranch, despite already having the *Liver Bloodstone*, award them an additional 80 XP.

Treasure: Defending Dortrot Ranch against Brumesgarth's army earns Hendle's eternal gratitude. As thanks, the rancher gives the party a 10% stake in the ranch. At the present, this stake is worth a mere 5,000 gp, but it might be sold for significantly more (or provide a reliable source of recurring income) if the nation of Lastwall is restored to its former glory.

Castle Firrine

One of the many strongholds the Knights of Ozem were forced to abandon when Lastwall fell to the forces of the newly freed Whispering Tyrant, Castle Firrine had served as a supply station and field hospital for crusaders campaigning in the Hold of Belkzen. Though the Knights of Lastwall currently believe Castle Firrine remains unoccupied, the fortress has not sat empty. When word of the Whispering Tyrant's return reached Belkzen, the leader of the Burning Sun hold, Mahja Firehair, sent a contingent of warriors into the Gravelands to battle the undead and lend aid to the

living. As this contingent traveled east toward Lake Encarthan, they came upon Castle Firrine.

While scavenging one of the castle's outbuildings for supplies, the orcs discovered a chapel in which lay the *Heart Bloodstone of Arazni*. The Burning Sun Hold is devoted to Sarenrae, not Arazni, but the orcs immediately recognized the artifact's power and decided that establishing a presence at Castle Firrine would both protect the *Bloodstone* and serve as a semi-permanent base for their hold within the Gravelands. Each year since, the Burning Sun Hold has celebrated the anniversary of their discovery with a week-long festival. The heroes' arrival at the castle coincides with this celebration.

From reports given to him by the scouts he sent to investigate Castle Firrine, Seldeg Bhedlis is already aware the Burning Sun Hold occupies the fortress and safeguards the *Bloodstone*. Rather than risk a frontal assault, Seldeg has sent a cadre of ecorches led by one of his lieutenants, a vampire named **Lady Siccale** (daring female vampire agent 19), to infiltrate the orcs' upcoming festival. As the heroes arrive at Castle Firrine, the ecorches have already infiltrated the castle wearing the skins of travelers unfamiliar to the Burning Sun Hold. Lady Siccale waits in the hills outside the castle with a larger contingent of undead, ready to attack the orcs directly should the ecorches' attempt to steal the *Bloodstone* fail.

Castle Firrine is an imposing structure built atop an upthrust of land between the Esk and Kestrel Rivers. Within its thick stone walls are dozens of chambers, but most are empty save for a handful that the Burning Sun Hold orcs have taken as living quarters. The bulk of this chapter takes place in an outbuilding where the Burning Sun is currently holding its celebration. The building lies just inside the castle's crumbling outer wall and is surrounded by a 10-foot-deep ditch. Areas C1 and C6 of this structure are open to the sky. The ceilings in all other areas are 15 feet high, unless otherwise noted.

As the heroes approach Castle Firrine, read or paraphrase the following.

Red and orange streamers have been draped across Castle Firrine's outer wall, their bright colors a stark contrast to the drab landscape beyond. In the castle's courtyard, dozens of figures are gathered around an outbuilding protected by a second, inner wall. The sounds of raucous laughter and other merriment can be heard through the structure's open entrance.

The bulk of the crowd gathered around the outbuilding are members of the original warband that settled in Castle Firrine nearly 5 years ago. A sizable minority, however, are orcs of other holds who have traveled to the castle to attend the celebration. The crowd's mood is festive, and while the heroes are likely an unusual sight, the orcs welcome them warmly. If the heroes ask to meet with someone in charge, they're directed to

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

the outbuilding's courtyard (area C1), where they can speak with Molgah Dawnspromise.

C1. Courtyard

The outbuilding's courtyard is the center of activity for the Burning Sun Hold's celebration. Brilliant flowers and streamers decorate the walls, and a handful of tables and chairs have been set out for seating. An impromptu stage has been erected at the east end of the courtyard.

When the heroes arrive, the courtyard is filled with orcs participating in various outdoor games, such as horseshoes and ax throwing. A single female orc dressed in the robes of a devotee of Sarenrae tends to a small mountain of fireworks assembled on the stage.

The orc setting up the fireworks is **Molgah Dawnspromise** (friendly female orc priest of Sarenrae 9). A member of the Burning Sun Hold, Molgah greets the heroes as they approach and immediately invites them to join the celebration. She says rooms and meals are available for whatever payment the heroes can afford (if the characters struggle to determine a fair price, she offers a starting point of 10 gp per night for all the heroes). If asked whether she's the one in charge at Castle Firrine, Molgah chuckles and gestures for the heroes to follow her to the petitioning hall (area C3), where they can meet with Chargug Brightsword, the Burning Sun's leader at the castle.

Development: If you have already played "Gravelands Survivors," the scouts Niskar Balefire, Ghrona, and Parchot are among the orcs playing in the games. If Garaag Sunbrand decided to join the orcs during that adventure, he's here as well.

Treasure: The Burning Sun Hold's week-long celebration features nightly fireworks displays. If fired as a weapon, each of the fireworks functions as an alchemical bomb with a range of 100 feet. The heroes can identify the fireworks as normal, but if one is grabbed at random, roll 1d4 to determine its function. The pile of fireworks on the stage currently contains 10 of each type of firework.

1d4	Alchemical Effect
1	Major alchemist's fire
2	Major blasting stone
3	Major bottled lightning
4	Major frost vial

C2. Gathering Hall

This hall serves as a gathering space for visitors during the Burning Sun Hold's annual celebration. A group of orcs have assembled in the northeast corner to attend



Chargug Brightsword

to light tasks, such as sharpening weapons or mending cloaks.

C3. Petitioning Hall

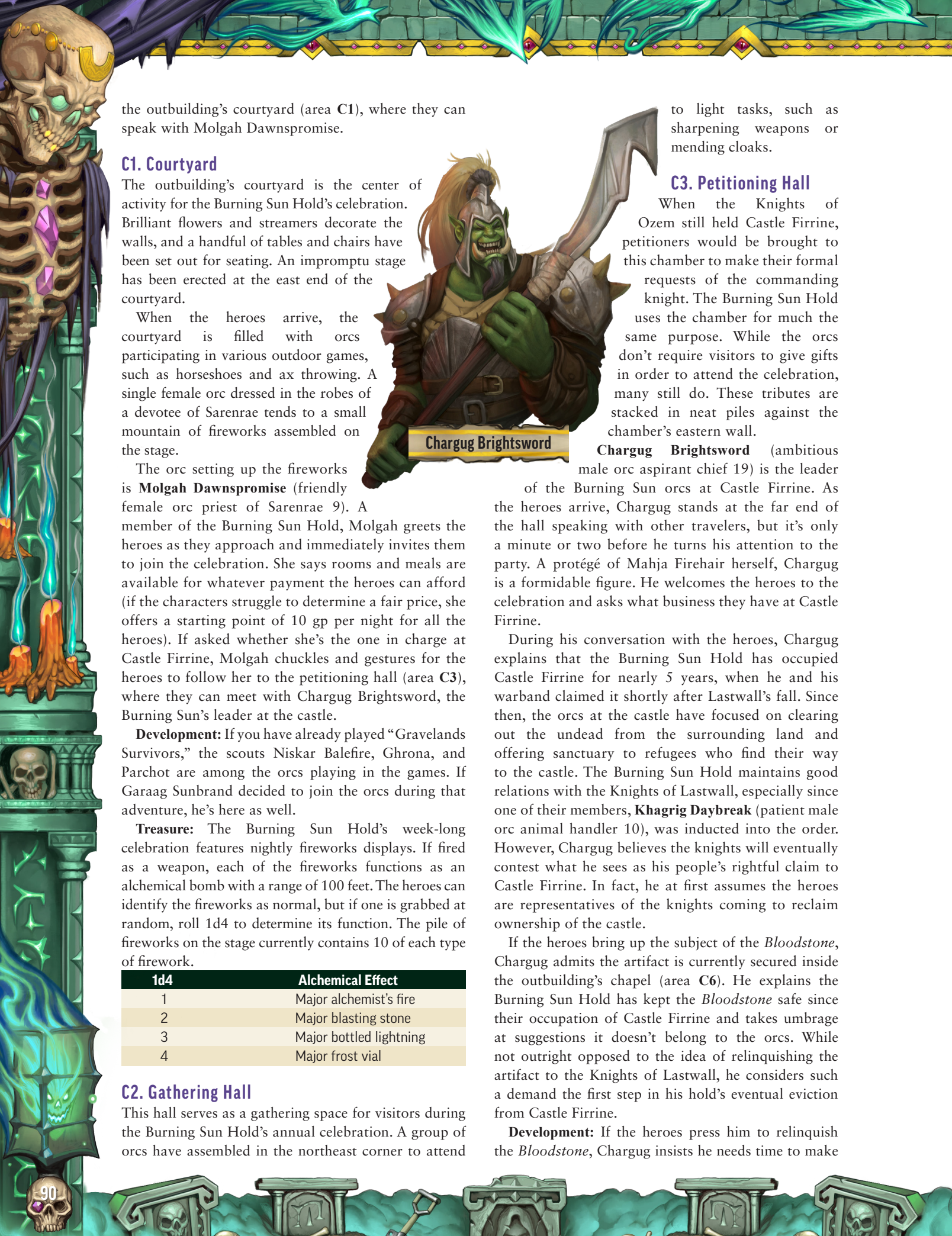
When the Knights of Ozem still held Castle Firrine, petitioners would be brought to this chamber to make their formal requests of the commanding knight. The Burning Sun Hold uses the chamber for much the same purpose. While the orcs don't require visitors to give gifts in order to attend the celebration, many still do. These tributes are stacked in neat piles against the chamber's eastern wall.

Chargug Brightsword (ambitious male orc aspirant chief 19) is the leader of the Burning Sun orcs at Castle Firrine. As the heroes arrive, Chargug stands at the far end of the hall speaking with other travelers, but it's only a minute or two before he turns his attention to the party. A protégé of Mahja Firehair herself, Chargug is a formidable figure. He welcomes the heroes to the celebration and asks what business they have at Castle Firrine.

During his conversation with the heroes, Chargug explains that the Burning Sun Hold has occupied Castle Firrine for nearly 5 years, when he and his warband claimed it shortly after Lastwall's fall. Since then, the orcs at the castle have focused on clearing out the undead from the surrounding land and offering sanctuary to refugees who find their way to the castle. The Burning Sun Hold maintains good relations with the Knights of Lastwall, especially since one of their members, **Khagrig Daybreak** (patient male orc animal handler 10), was inducted into the order. However, Chargug believes the knights will eventually contest what he sees as his people's rightful claim to Castle Firrine. In fact, he at first assumes the heroes are representatives of the knights coming to reclaim ownership of the castle.

If the heroes bring up the subject of the *Bloodstone*, Chargug admits the artifact is currently secured inside the outbuilding's chapel (area C6). He explains the Burning Sun Hold has kept the *Bloodstone* safe since their occupation of Castle Firrine and takes umbrage at suggestions it doesn't belong to the orcs. While not outright opposed to the idea of relinquishing the artifact to the Knights of Lastwall, he considers such a demand the first step in his hold's eventual eviction from Castle Firrine.

Development: If the heroes press him to relinquish the *Bloodstone*, Chargug insists he needs time to make



such an important decision. He invites the heroes to stay for the celebration as he ponders the matter further. The heroes will have time to convince Chargug to give them the *Bloodstone* during **Event 1: The Five-Year Celebration**.

Treasure: The tributes piled against the eastern wall are mostly trade goods. In total, they're worth 1,000 gp. Among the mundane goods are 4 major elixirs of life and a *wand of create food* (8th rank).

C4. The Guts

The knights who once maintained the chapel (area C6) lived in a series of rooms in this section of the outbuilding. The rooms are connected by a series of twisting halls the Burning Sun orcs have dubbed "the Guts." Visitors from other holds are invited to stay in these rooms, rather than inside the castle proper.

Creatures: The three ecorches Seldeg Bhedlis sent to infiltrate the festival wait out their time in one of the visitors' chambers. The Burning Sun Hold orcs don't recognize the ecorches (who currently wear the skins of orcs from other holds), but as visitors to the celebration are common, the orcs have no reason to suspect the presence of the undead. The ecorches keep to their room, and unless the heroes begin snooping about, the undead creatures likely go unnoticed by the party as well.

C5. Churchyard

The door to this area is guarded night and day by two Burning Sun warriors. In stark contrast to the other attendees at the celebration, the mood of these orcs is solemn. They're unwavering in their duty and immediately raise an alarm if they spot anyone attempting to enter the churchyard.

Beyond the door, the graves of knights and Burning Sun warriors lie side-by-side in the chapel's well-kept yard. The symbols of Iomedae and Sarenrae are a common sight among the markers.

C6. Chapel

Wooden pews stand in neat rows along the chapel's length. An altar cloth bearing the symbol of Sarenrae is draped over a stone altar at the far end of the chapel. If the heroes lift the cloth, the chapel's former dedication to Iomedae becomes clear, as her flaming sword is carved into the altar's stone. Resting atop the altar is a wooden box carved with a series of ornate, interlocking panels.

Treasure: The box atop the altar is a reliquary containing the *Heart Bloodstone of Arazni*. Lined with alternating sheets of adamantine and silver, the box is much heavier than it appears (10 Bulk). The box's panels can be shifted, exposing a tricky puzzle lock. Opening the box requires four successful DC 40 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock or a single DC 44 Games Lore check to solve the puzzle. Molgah Dawnspromise solved the

puzzle shortly after the Burning Sun arrived at the castle and can share the solution with the heroes if they become stuck.

Rewards: Award the heroes 100 XP for obtaining the *Heart Bloodstone of Arazni*.

Event 1: The Five-Year Celebration

The afternoon's celebration takes place in the outbuilding's courtyard. Partygoers come and go, but Chargug remains at the center of the festivities. He plays with the children, takes part in friendly competitions, and enjoys copious amounts of food and drink. The mood throughout the celebration remains jovial, even between members of traditionally rival holds. Everyone waits in anticipation for the fireworks display, which is scheduled to begin at nightfall.

The heroes can partake in the festivities as they see fit, but the celebration also gives them an opportunity to endear themselves to Chargug. The heroes have three rounds to influence Chargug throughout the celebration. At the end of the third round, the lighting of the fireworks begins. Proceed to **Event 4: Undead Infiltration**.

CHARGUG BRIGHTSWORD

INFLUENCE 19

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

Ambitious war leader

Perception +33

Will +35

Discovery DC 35 Orc Lore, DC 40 Religion, DC 38 Society

Influence Skills DC 36 Sarenrae Lore or DC 38 Religion (to discuss religious philosophy), DC 38 Gravelands Lore or Warfare Lore (to note the difficulty of surviving in this area of the Gravelands), DC 40 Acrobatics or Athletics (to win a race or other contest against Chargug), DC 42 Diplomacy (to frankly broach the matter of the *Bloodstone*)

Influence 2 Chargug mentions that he recently dreamed of a man in black armor burying bones in the fields beyond the castle's walls. He considers the dream to be an ill omen. His trust in the heroes gives them more time to prepare before

Event 3: Aggressive Action.

Influence 4 Chargug warms up to the heroes and is willing to discuss the matter of the *Bloodstone* directly. Bringing up the ownership of the *Bloodstone* no longer increases the check DCs to influence Chargug (see Resistances).

Influence 6 Chargug entrusts the heroes with the *Bloodstone*, provided they promise to ask the Knights of Lastwall for a writ formally renouncing their claim on Castle Firrine.

Resistances Chargug at first suspects the heroes are agents sent by the Knights of Lastwall to judge the orcs' strength. Suggesting that the Knights are the rightful owners of either Castle Firrine or the *Bloodstone* increases the check's DC by 2.

Weaknesses Though he is an accomplished warrior on the battlefield, Chargug has his sights set on leading a hold of his own someday. Offering him leadership tips or encouraging his ambitions reduces the DC by 2.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX



Background Chargug has led the orcs at Castle Firrine for the last 5 years but is still too inexperienced to rule a proper hold. Though he projects an aura of confidence for outsiders, he's less certain in his abilities than he appears.

Appearance Chargug is a muscular, middle-aged orc with laugh lines already creased into his face.

Personality Despite being a fearsome warrior, Chargug is warm and quick to laughter. He becomes serious in moments of peril, but even then he'll often will break the tension with a joke.

Development: Award the heroes 40 XP if they reach the Influence 4 threshold with Chargug. Award the heroes an additional 40 XP if they reach the Influence 6 threshold.

Event 2: Undead Infiltration

Low 19

As the sight of the multi-colored pyrotechnics sends murmurs of delight through the partygoers, the ecorches launch their bid to steal the *Bloodstone*.

Creatures: The three elite ecorches enter the courtyard as the lighting of the fireworks begins. The ecorches use Stealth for initiative. On the first round of the encounter, two of the ecorches use their Muscular Leap ability to vault over the wall to area C6, where they enter the chapel in search of the *Heart Bloodstone of Arazni*. Meanwhile, the third ecorche remains behind, using Tear Skin to discourage the crowd from pursuing.

ELITE ECORCHES (3)

CREATURE 17

MEDIUM UNDEAD UNHOLY

Book of the Dead 90, *Monster Core* 6

Perception +29; darkvision

Languages Common, Necril

Skills Athletics +35, Deception +33, Intimidation +29 (+33 when skinless), Stealth +30

Str +9, **Dex** +6, **Con** +7, **Int** +0, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +5

AC 40; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +32, **Will** +29

HP 295, void healing (*Monster Core* 360); **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ claw +35 (agile), **Damage** 3d8+19 slashing

Flaying Flurry ♦♦ The ecorche attempts two claw Strikes against the same target. If both hit and deal damage, it attempts to pull the skin off its target. It attempts an Athletics check against the enemy's Fortitude DC.

Critical Success The ecorche fully pulls the target's skin off its body. The creature takes 4d8 persistent bleed damage, and it's frightened 4 and stunned 4. The bleed damage can't end naturally, only ending if the creature regains at least 75 HP or regains at least 10 HP from regeneration.

Success The target takes 2d8 persistent bleed damage and is stunned 1.

Muscular Leap ♦ The ecorche over-stresses its leg muscles for a massive jump. It loses 20 HP and Leaps up to 120

feet in any direction. If its next action is a Strike or Flaying Flurry, it doesn't fall until after that action.

Tear Skin ♦ (emotion, fear, manipulate, mental, visual)

Requirements The ecorche is wearing skin; **Effect** The ecorche destroys the skin it's currently wearing. The ecorche reverts to its true appearance and size, and anyone within 120 feet who witnesses this must succeed at a DC 39 Will save or become frightened 2 (frightened 4 on a critical failure). Regardless of the results of their saving throws, the creatures are temporarily immune for 24 hours.

Wear Skin ♦ (manipulate) **Requirements** The ecorche is holding the stolen skin of a Small, Medium, or Large creature and isn't already wearing a skin; **Effect** The ecorche wears the skin as a disguise. It assumes the creature's size, appearance, and voice. Wearing Skin counts as a disguise for the Impersonate use of Deception. The ecorche's transformation automatically defeats Perception DCs to determine whether it's a member of the ancestry or creature type into which it transformed, and the ecorche gains a +4 status bonus to its Deception DC to prevent others from seeing through its disguise.

Wearing a skin gives the ecorche a +2 item bonus to AC and 75 temporary Hit Points. If the ecorche takes more than 50 slashing damage from a single source, the skin becomes broken. When broken, the skin no longer provides any of these benefits (any remaining temporary HP are immediately lost) but can still be used for Tear Skin.

Development: During the battle, the two ecorches who jump over the wall head straight for the chapel (area C6), pausing to attack the heroes only if forced to engage in melee. Unless the party stops them, once the ecorches secure the *Bloodstone*, they jump over the outer walls and abscond with the artifact to Hammer Rock.

Event 3: Aggressive Action

Severe 19

Moments after the encounter with the ecorches, a lone orc rider gallops into the courtyard and calls for Chargug to meet him in the Petitioning Hall (area C3), where the rider informs him that undead have been spotted in the hills near the castle. If the heroes reached the Influence 2 threshold with Chargug during **Event 1: The Five-Year Celebration**, the orc leader motions for the party to follow. Otherwise, the heroes learn the rider's news when Chargug reemerges several minutes later to announce that a force of undead approaches Castle Firrine.

If the heroes learn of the approaching undead directly from the rider, they have 10 minutes to prepare for the attack. Otherwise, they have 1 minute.

Creatures: If the ecorches fail to emerge from the castle with the *Bloodstone*, Lady Siccale decides to take the artifact by force. As the Burning Sun orcs retreat into the castle proper, a horde of undead atop skeletal steeds appear on the horizon. When the undead arrive at the castle, Lady Siccale and two zombie desecrators

break from the main force and head to the chapel where the *Bloodstone* is secured. Lady Siccale and the desecrators all ride moldering steeds.

During the encounter, assume the Burning Sun orcs are busy repelling the main force of undead, leaving the heroes to defend the *Bloodstone*.

LADY SICCALE

CREATURE 19

UNIQUE MEDIUM UNDEAD UNHOLY VAMPIRE

True vampire assassin (*Monster Core* 334)

Perception +32; darkvision

Languages Common, Draconic, Necril

Skills Acrobatics +37, Athletics +31, Deception +35, Intimidation +32, Poison Lore +35, Society +33, Stealth +40, Thievery +38

Str +4, **Dex** +10, **Con** +5, **Int** +4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6

Items cerulean scourge poison (5) (*Player Core* 2 292), +2 major striking dagger (6), high-fashion clothing with a +3 greater resilient rune, major oil of unlife (3)

Children of the Night (divine, mental) (*Monster Core* 336)

AC 43; **Fort** +35, **Ref** +38, **Will** +35

HP 360, coffin restoration (*Monster Core* 334), fast healing 15 (*Monster Core* 359), void healing (*Monster Core* 360);

Immunities death effects, disease, paralyze, poison, sleep;

Resistances physical 15 (except magical silver)

Vampire Vulnerabilities (*Monster Core* 334)

Mist Escape ♦ (*Monster Core* 335)

Speed 25 feet, climb 25 feet

Melee ♦ claws +33 (agile), **Damage** 4d8+17 slashing plus Grab (*Monster Core* 359)

Melee ♦ dagger +35 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 4d4+17 piercing

Ranged ♦ dagger +35 (agile, finesse, magical, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 4d4+17 piercing

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, divine, polymorph) Giant bat with fangs +33 for 4d8+17 piercing. (*Monster Core* 358)

Create Servitor (divine, downtime)

Dominate ♦♦ (divine, incapacitation, mental, visual) DC 38 (*Monster Core* 336)

Drink Blood ♦ (divine) When Drinking Blood, the Lady Siccale regains 36 HP. (*Monster Core* 336)

Poison Weapon ♦ Lady Siccale applies poison to a dagger. If she has a free hand, she can Interact to draw a poison as part of the action. If her next attack with that weapon hits and deals damage, it applies the effect of the poison. If she critically fails the attack roll, the poison is wasted.

Turn to Mist ♦ (air, concentrate, divine, polymorph) (*Monster Core* 336)

MOLDERING STEEDS (3)

CREATURE 16

Page 117

Initiative Perception +28

ZOMBIE DESECRATORS (2)

CREATURE 17

Page 85

Initiative Perception +23

Treasure: In addition to her equipment, Lady Siccale carries a pouch containing 250 gp (an advance from Seldeg for recovering the *Bloodstone*), as well as a collection of illuminated pages commissioned by the Ghost King Geb shortly after he transformed Arazni into a lich. The pages depict the *Bloodstones of Arazni* and were given to the vampire by Seldeg to help her identify the artifacts. The pages are worth 1,000 gp, or up to 5,000 gp if sold as a set to a collector.

Development: If either the ecorches or Lady Siccale escape with the *Bloodstone*, they return to Hammer Rock with the artifact. Otherwise, the party's bravery during the attack convinces Chargug that the *Bloodstone* would be safer in their hands than at Castle Firrine. He bids farewell to the heroes, leaving them with an open invitation to return to the castle "once these troubles are over."

If the heroes haven't yet retrieved the *Liver Bloodstone*, they can travel to Dortrot Ranch to do so now. Alternatively, they can head directly to Hammer Rock to face Seldeg Bhedlis and prevent the graveknight from completing his ritual.



CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



CHAPTER 3: THE RECKONING OF ARAZNI

When Arazni the lich escaped from Seldeg Bhedlis and ascended to the status of a god, the graveknight's worldview shattered. Seldeg now seems to love and hate Arazni in equal measure. Though resentful that Arazni, his former queen, would simply "abandon" him, he clings to the idea that he can find a way back into the goddess's good graces and somehow secure his own redemption. To do so, he's devised a plan that, if successful, will turn the history of Golarion on its head. Whereas Iomedae was once uplifted in glory, she will be cast down into death and failure. And instead of being tormented with imprisonment and humiliation, Arazni will rise to take Iomedae's place. Swapping the fates of the goddesses, however, requires a ritual the likes of which the Universe has never seen.

To enact this ritual, Seldeg has gathered a collection of powerful artifacts, including the *Chalice of Ozem* and any *Bloodstones of Arazni* the heroes failed to collect. Seldeg is convinced that the *Chalice* connects

Iomedae and Arazni in some way, as the relic is uniquely tied to Iomedae's victory at the Battle of Three Sorrows, the same battle in which Tar-Baphon killed Arazni. The chalice's method of destruction supports Seldeg in this belief: if the *Chalice of Ozem* is filled with Iomedae's blood and Arazni drinks from it, the chalice shatters.

As for the *Bloodstones*, the relics contain pieces of Arazni's physical body, organs removed from her when Geb transformed her into a lich. Throughout her reign in Geb, the *Bloodstones* were vital for controlling Arazni, and anyone who possesses all four *Bloodstones* today could control the goddess again. While Seldeg knows the *Bloodstones* would lend power to his ritual (and perhaps grant him some influence over Arazni once the ritual is complete), he plans to continue with the ritual with or without the artifacts. He knows enough about magic that he's certain *something* horrible will happen if he completes the ritual, so it falls on the heroes to end his evil here and now. If Seldeg completes his ritual, he's

unlikely to get the exact outcome he desires, but what remains certain is that his attempt to rewrite history will be catastrophic, not only for Arazni and Iomedae, but the Universe as a whole.

HAMMER ROCK

Seldeg plans to enact his ritual at the former crusader stronghold of Hammer Rock. Built atop the ruins of the dwarven fortress of Glerhadring, Hammer Rock faced destruction when the Whispering Tyrant targeted it with the *Radiant Fire* 6 years ago. Miraculously, the fortress withstood the attack more or less intact, although the after-effects of the *Radiant Fire* have transformed the land around it into a lifeless hellscape.

As the heroes approach, Hammer Rock seems largely abandoned, save for a series of structures at the western end of the fortress. Walls made of what appears to be living flesh (area **D1**) seal the entrances to the northernmost of these structures (area **D2**). Attached to this building is a smaller structure (area **D3**), the door to which was consumed entirely by the *Radiant Fire*. South of the smaller building is a courtyard (area **D4**) where the ground has collapsed to reveal entrances to a network of passageways beneath the fortress. The final building (area **D5**) shares a wall with the previous two but can be accessed only on the eastern side, where the structure has partially collapsed. Through this gap in the wall, the heroes can see the unmistakable flicker of magic; this is where Seldeg works to complete his ritual. The heroes can explore the locations in any order.

D1. The Flesh Gates

Trivial 20

A wall of pinkish, undulating flesh grows in the gap where the entrance to this building once stood. Black, leafless vines snake through the flesh-like veins. Where the vines emerge from the flesh, clusters of flowers bloom.

The radiant veranallia that resides in area **D2** constructed the flesh gate, drawing on the combination of concentrated life energy and the power of the Void wrought by the Whispering Tyrant's *Radiant Fire*. Any creature that touches the gate takes 6d6 vitality damage and 6d6 void damage (DC 42 basic Fortitude save) per round they remain in contact with it. Each gate is 5 feet thick. A creature can attempt a DC 44 Acrobatics check to Squeeze through the flesh. Alternatively, a creature can attempt to disrupt the magic that powers the gate by attempting a DC 40 Arcana, Nature, Religion, or Occultism check. Three successes destroys the gate entirely. The flesh gate has Hardness 20, 80 HP, and BT 40. If subjected to vitality or void damage, the flesh gate takes no damage and instead regains an equal number of Hit Points.

Reward: Once the heroes overcome the first flesh gate, grant them 80 XP. They gain no additional XP for bypassing the second gate.

D2. Blighted Garden

Trivial 20

The walls of this chamber are covered with vines bearing fruits that ripen and rot at a mind-boggling pace. In contrast, the chamber's floor is carpeted with dust the color of pale ashes.

The spaces filled with vines are greater difficult terrain for all creatures other than the veranallia. The dust-covered floor doesn't impede movement, but a creature standing on ground at the beginning of their turn takes 6d6 void damage (DC 42 basic Fortitude save).

Creatures: When Tar-Baphon's *Radiant Fire* devastated Lastwall, the veranallia that dwells in this room was caught in one of the blasts. The strange mix of competing energies immediately transformed her into an undead creature infused with life energy. Seldeg has since enlisted the radiant veranallia to his cause.

RADIANT VERANALLIA

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE MEDIUM MUMMY UNDEAD UNHOLY

Veranallia mummy (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 31, *Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 72)

Perception +38; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 120 feet

Languages Diabolic, Draconic, Empyrean, Necril; *truespeech*

Skills Athletics +34, Deception +36, Diplomacy +38,

Intimidation +36, Medicine +36, Nature +34, Survival +38

Str +8, **Dex** +6, **Con** +8, **Int** +6, **Wis** +10, **Cha** +8

Items +3 *greater striking sickle*

AC 45; **Fort** +36, **Ref** +34, **Will** +38

HP 475, void healing (*Monster Core* 360); **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** cold 20; **Weaknesses** cold iron 20, fire 20

Speed 40 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee *sickle* +39 (agile, finesse, magical, trip), **Damage** 3d4+16 slashing plus 4d6 cold and 1d6 spirit

Melee *vine* +39 (reach 20 feet), **Damage** 4d12+16 bludgeoning plus 1d6 spirit and Improved Grab (*Monster Core* 359)

Divine Innate Spells DC 42, attack +32; **10th** *cataclysm, remake, revival*; **9th** *nature's pathway* (at will), *regenerate* (×3), *wrathful storm*; **8th** *arctic rift* (at will), *sunburst* (at will); **6th** *cursed metamorphosis* (at will), *tangling creepers* (at will); **Constant (9th)** *environmental endurance, speak with animals, speak with plants, truespeech*

Rituals DC 42; **6th** *awaken animal, primal call*; **4th** *blight, plant growth*; **2nd** *consecrate*

Alter Weather **Frequency** three times per day; **Effect** The veranallia dramatically alters weather patterns in the surrounding area, producing any of the results of a successful 9th-rank *control weather* ritual.

Rebirth (divine) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The veranallia spends a minute to encase a creature that has been dead for no more than a year in a cocoon. After 24 hours, the creature is restored to life, and the cocoon explodes in a shower of dust. If the veranallia chooses, Rebirth can change the creature's ancestry or heritage, typically into a skeleton (*Book of the Dead* 54).

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

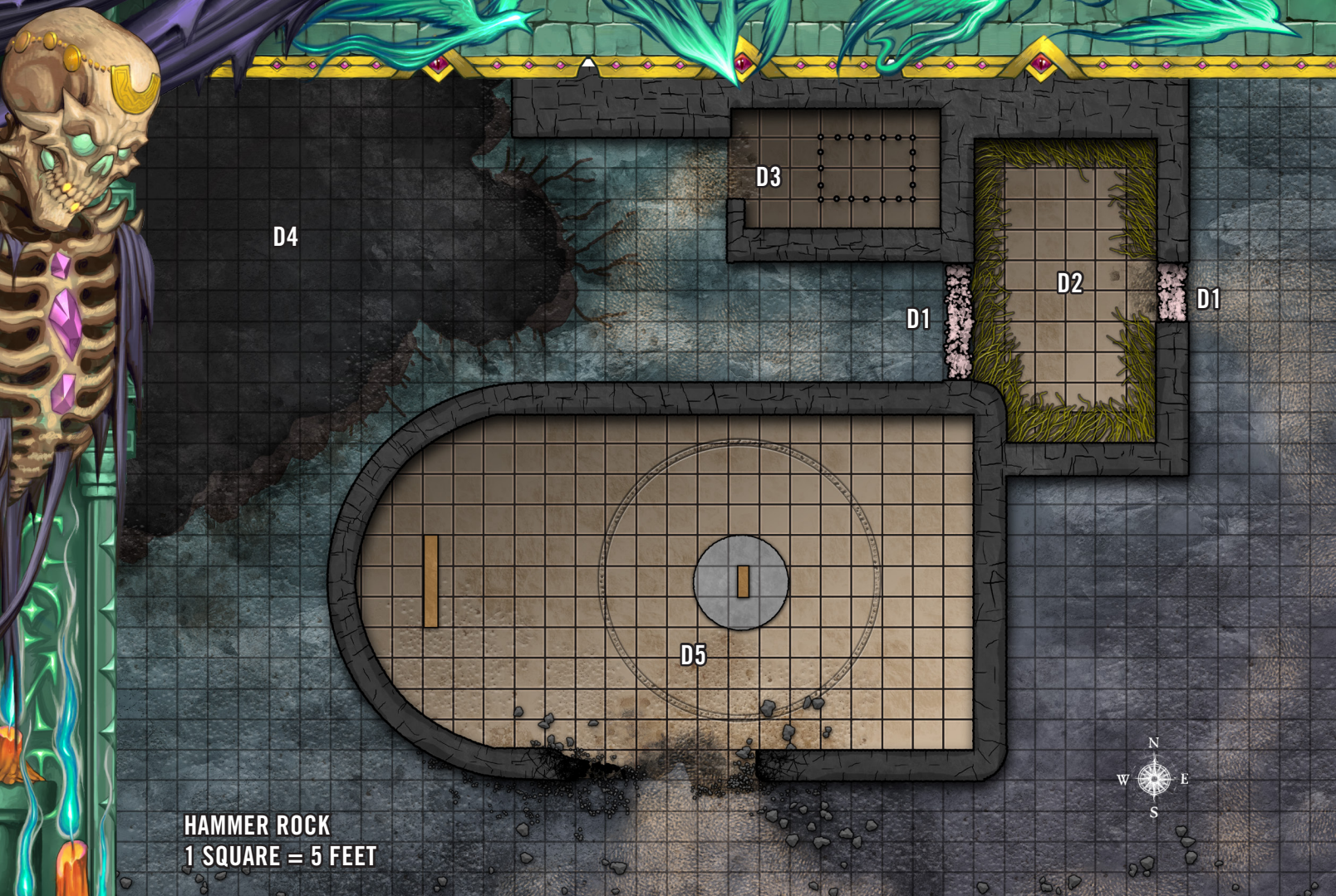
INTRODUCTION GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



HAMMER ROCK 1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

Development: If Onturat escaped from Corlach Keep, the heroes find the skultaker here awaiting the completion of Seldeg's ritual. Onturat's presence increases the encounter's difficulty to Moderate.

Treasure: Tangled among the vines in the room's northwest corner is a +3 *major striking dagger*.

D3. Norn's Cage

Trivial 20

In the center of the room, metal bars stretch from the floor to the ceiling, enclosing a 10-foot-by-15-foot area. The floor of this cage is caked with dried blood and some other, even darker, residue.

The wooden door that separated this room from the rest of Hammer Rock was destroyed in a blast of *Radiant Fire*. The cage in the center of the room is made of cold iron bars (Hardness 28, HP 112, BT 56) separated by 1-foot-wide gaps. The cage has no door. A character who studies the dark residue on the floor of the cage can attempt a DC 40 Arcana, Crafting, Occultism, or Religion check. On a success, the character identifies it as the remains of a special salve used to transform still-living creatures into undead.

Creatures: The cage contains a norn Seldeg captured in preparation for his ritual. Seldeg knew he would need the aid of a norn to make such a drastic alteration to

the fates of Iomedae and Arazni but was also certain no norn would willingly agree to his plan. Instead, much as Geb did with Arazni, he forcibly turned this norn into an undead creature and bound her to him with powerful magic. Seldeg now uses the norn's shears as one of the components for the ritual he is casting in area D4.

The chained norn no longer remembers her name or triumvirate. The norn can't touch or interact with the bars of the cage in any way, but she casts spells at any creature that enters the room.

CHAINED NOR

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE LARGE UNDEAD

Variant norn (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 241)

Perception +41; *detect magic*, greater darkvision, lifesense 120 feet, *truesight*

Languages Common, Fey, Jotun; *truespeech*

Skills Crafting +36, Deception +35, Intimidation +37, Lore (all) +28, Medicine +38, Occultism +34, Performance +31, Religion +34

Str +7, **Dex** +6, **Con** +6, **Int** +6, **Wis** +10, **Cha** +7

Broken Fate (misfortune) The chained norn automatically rolls a 1 when she rolls initiative.

Broken Triumvirate The chained norn's fate has been severed from the rest of the norns. She can't join a triumvirate or willingly take a hostile action against a norn.

AC 46; **Fort** +34, **Ref** +30, **Will** +38; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 375, regeneration 20 (deactivated by cold iron), void healing (*Monster Core* 360); **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, off-guard, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** cold iron 20

Broken Fates Aura (aura, mental, misfortune, occult) 60 feet. Creatures other than norns in the aura must attempt a DC 42 Will save. On a successful save, the creature is temporarily immune to the broken fates aura for 24 hours. On a failure, the creature can't benefit from effects with the fortune trait for 24 hours.

Rewind Fate (misfortune, occult) **Trigger** A creature within 120 feet would succeed on an attack or skill check; **Effect** The creature must attempt the attack or skill check again, rolling twice and taking the worse result.

Speed 35 feet, fly 35 feet

Melee **◆** hand of fate +38 (agile, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 4d10+15 void plus sever fate

Occult Innate Spells DC 42; **10th** freeze time; **9th** execute, phantasmagoria, retrocognition; **8th** migration, quandary; **7th** dispel magic (at will), read omens (at will), spellwrack (at will); **Constant (10th)** detect magic, hidden mind, truesight, truespeech

Rituals DC 42; **7th** collective memories; **3rd** geas

Fated When a creature is subject to a misfortune effect from a norn and a fortune effect from any source other than a norn (or vice versa), the norn's effect automatically counteracts the other effect and then takes place normally, rather than the two effects canceling each other out. If both the fortune and misfortune effect are from a norn, then the two cancel each other out as normal. At the GM's discretion, powerful entities related to fate or luck, like Desna, Magdh, or Pharasma, can't have their effects negated by this ability.

Sever Fate (occult) When a norn deals void damage with a Strike, she regains 10 Hit Points. The target must succeed at a DC 39 Fortitude save or become drained 1 (drained 2 on a critical failure). Further void damage dealt by the norn increases the drained condition value by 1 on a failed save (or by 2 on a critical failure), to a maximum of drained 4.

Development: If any of the ecorches escaped from the assault on Castle Firrine, the heroes encounter them here dressed in skins that remind the chained norn of the norns to whom she was once bonded. So long as the ecorches remained disguised, the chained norn does not attack them. If Lady Siccale escaped, she lurks near the building's ceiling in mist form (using her Turn to Mist ability). The presence of the elite ecorches or Lady Siccale increases the encounter's difficulty to Moderate. If both Lady Siccale and the ecorches are here, the encounter's difficulty increases to Severe.

D4. Courtyard

Low 20

Toward the western end of the courtyard, broken and soot-covered cobblestones fall away into a yawning chasm. Openings in the sides of the pit hint at passageways running beneath the fortress.

When Tar-Baphon's *Radiant Fire* struck Hammer Rock, this courtyard took a direct hit, infusing the cobblestones with energy from the Void. The soot covering the ground is a mark of this damage, as is the 30-foot-deep chasm.

The ruined courtyard extends to the southwest, well beyond the edges of the map. If necessary, use blank maps to extend the area for this encounter.

Creatures: The concentrated void energy left behind by the *Radiant Fire* enticed a ravener to nest inside the chasm. It rises to attack anyone who approaches the chasm's edge. The ravener's arrival stirs up a cloud of soot around the chasm that lasts for 1 round. All creatures within 15 feet of the chasm become concealed, and all



CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX



creatures outside the area become concealed to creatures within it. The ravener ignores the concealed condition from the soot.

RAVENER

CREATURE 21

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 224

Initiative Perception +37

Development: Unless the heroes found a way to prevent Brumesgarth's Rejuvenation after the battle at Dortrot Ranch, the runecarved lich stands at the edge of the chasm. Should Seldeg complete his ritual, Brumesgarth descends beneath Hammer Rock to raise an undead army on behalf of the newly risen Arazni. Brumesgarth's presence increases the difficulty of the encounter with the ravener to Moderate.

Treasure: The ravener has hidden his hoard at the mouth of one of the passages. This treasure includes a set of *major bands of force*, a *wand of fireballs* (9th rank), a *greater messenger's ring*, an *obsidian crystal ball*, and an *amplifying aeon stone*.

D5. The Fated Ritual Room

Severe 20

The south wall of this grand chapel is made up of eleven floor-to-ceiling, stained glass panels. Each window depicts a scene of Iomedae in a moment of triumph. In one, the goddess drives her blade into a mohrg. In another, a nimbus of nine ruby-red drops of blood surrounds her as she drives a stake through the heart of a vampire.

In the center of the chapel, twin circles of mystical runes glow on the chamber's floor and ceiling, as if seared there by a brand. Occasionally, a jolt of electricity arcs from one circle to the other, causing the light of the glowing runes to ebb and flow. A stone platform floats in midair directly between the two circles. The platform supports a worktable atop which various arcane implements have been arranged. A barely audible buzz, too quiet to pinpoint, fills the room.

Atop the platform, an armor-clad knight chants over a chalice set atop the worktable. As his chanting ceases, the figure glances at an hourglass also on the worktable and slowly shakes his head.

"Fools!" The knight hisses, his calm demeanor betrayed by the hatred in his voice. "I will destroy each of you and ensure your souls are shredded before they ever reach the Boneyard. I see you as you are and declare you traitors to my goddess Arazni, fit only to fuel this act that will raise her to her rightful stature!"

The knight draws his longsword, and as he does, the weapon bursts into flame. Below him, the ground trembles, as if the world itself is beginning to break apart.

The heroes have interrupted Seldeg Bhedlis minutes before the completion of his ritual to swap the fates of Arazni and Iomedae. If allowed to succeed, Seldeg's ritual will likely bring about a crisis as world-shaking as the

death of Aroden. If the fates of the two goddesses could be reversed, Iomedae would fall, corrupting her followers along with her. At the same time, Arazni's history would be erased, and she would once again be thrust into a role she never wished to play. To prevent this from happening, the heroes must do one of the following: remove the components atop the worktable from within the confines of the ritual circles, permanently destroy the ritual circles on the floor and ceiling (see Hazard below), or prevent Seldeg from returning to the ritual within the next 10 minutes.

The ritual objects arranged on the worktable include the broken remnants of a lich's soul cage, the shears Seldeg stole from the chained norn in area **D3**, and the *Chalice of Ozem*, as well as any of the *Bloodstones of Arazni* the heroes failed to recover earlier in the adventure. Removing all these items from within the glowing circles interrupts the ritual. So long as even one of the items remains, Seldeg can complete the magic, although removing the *Chalice of Ozem* or any *Bloodstones* makes destroying the ritual circles less difficult. For each *Bloodstone* Seldeg has in his possession during the ritual, increase the DCs to disable the Twist of Fate hazard by 1. If the heroes can remove the *Chalice of Ozem* from inside the circumference of the ritual circles, decrease the DCs to disable the hazard by 2.

The chapel's ceiling is 80 feet high. The platform Seldeg stands upon floats 40 feet above the chapel's floor.

Creatures: As the heroes have interrupted Seldeg in the midst of his ritual, the graveknight uses Arazni Lore for initiative in this encounter. His priority is to return to his ritual by destroying any opposition. He refuses to leave the chamber and focuses on continuing the ritual as soon as he is able. If the heroes disable the Twist of Fate hazard before Seldeg is destroyed, the graveknight abandons all sense of self-preservation.

Hazard: Seldeg's attempt to rewrite history and alter the futures of both Arazni and Iomedae strains the fabric of reality itself. While Seldeg battles the heroes, the ritual remains on hold, waiting for the graveknight to complete the magic. The unreleased accumulation of divine energy threatens all creatures in the area, but if the heroes can disable the Twist of Fate hazard, they can foil Seldeg's plans for the two goddesses.

SELDEG BHEDLIS EMBITTERED

CREATURE 20

Page 124

Initiative Arazni Lore +38

TWIST OF FATE

HAZARD 22

UNIQUE **COMPLEX** **DIVINE** **MAGICAL**

Stealth +25 (master) to notice the buildup of divine energy and anticipate its discharge.

Description Seldeg's ritual nears its conclusion, causing magical energy to arc erratically between the ritual circles.

Disable DC 44 Arazni Lore or Iomedae Lore to recount a tale from history that grounds that deity in the current reality,

DC 50 Crafting (legendary) to create a device to siphon energy from the ritual circle, or DC 46 Religion (legendary) to discharge the escalating divine energy; six successes (three successes per circle) are required to disarm the hazard

Reorder Reality ➤ **Trigger** A creature other than Seldeg enters the area contained by the ritual circles; **Effect** Arcs of divine energy travel between the two circles. Each creature within the circles takes 4d10+26 spirit damage (DC 45 basic Fortitude save). If one of the ritual circles has been disabled, the hazard instead affects all creature in the room, but each creature gains a +2 circumstance bonus to their save. The hazard rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action; divine) The divine energy gathered by the ritual spikes. One of the eleven stained-glass windows (each depicting one of her Eleven Acts) transforms to feature Arazni instead. Any creature that can see the window change must attempt a DC 50 Will save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and is immune to this effect for 10 minutes.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature takes 3d12+20 mental damage.

Critical Failure The creature takes 6d12+40 mental damage.

If the creatures' next d20 roll is a critical success, they earn a critical failure instead. This is a misfortune effect.

If all 11 windows transform, Seldeg's ritual finishes ahead of schedule. The stained-glass windows shatter, dealing 8d10+52 piercing damage (DC 50 Reflex save) to each creature in the room. The hazard then becomes inactive.

Reset While atop the floating platform, Seldeg Bhedlis can use a 3-action activity with the auditory trait to reenergize the ritual. Doing so removes one success to disable the hazard and immediately triggers the hazard's Reorder Reality reaction.

Developments: Seldeg's surviving allies rush to his aid throughout the encounter. At the end of the first round, the ravener and any other creatures in area **D4** arrive. At the end of the third round, the radiant veranallia and any creatures in area **D2** arrive. The chained norn arrives from area **D3** at the end of the sixth round, assuming Lady Siccale or the ecorches are there to free her from her cage. The addition of more enemies to the encounter increases the difficulty to Extreme or beyond.

Stopping Seldeg is at best a temporary solution unless the heroes destroy his graveknight armor. Typically, destroying a graveknight's armor requires throwing it into a volcano or Creation's Forge. However, a character who succeeds at a DC 40 Arazni Lore or DC 44 Religion check to Recall Knowledge recognizes that touching all four *Bloodstones of Arazni* to Seldeg's armor would also result in its destruction.

Treasure: Among the ritual supplies Seldeg has gathered is 5,000 gp worth of incense, 8,000 gp worth of rare oils, and 12,000 gp worth of powdered diamond. Unless returned to her, the norn's sheers are worth 20,000 gp.

AN ENCOUNTER ON THE ROAD

Having put an end to Seldeg Bhedlis's plan to swap the fates of Arazni and Iomedae, the heroes can recover the *Chalice of Ozem* and any remaining *Bloodstones of Arazni*. Assuming the party gave Arazni one of the *Bloodstones* during their meeting with her in Vellumis (and she lent them one the *Bloodstones* in return), the heroes should now have three of the four *Bloodstones* in their possession.

Shortly after they depart from Hammer Rock, the heroes feel the air around them ripple with divine energy as Arazni appears before them once again. The goddess seems cautiously pleased with the heroes as she begins to speak.

"I thank you, my friends, for your bravery in the face of hopeless odds. Seldeg Bhedlis was a fool, but an evil and ambitious one. The world is better off without him. Now, I believe you have something of mine?"

Arazni waits expectantly for the heroes to relinquish the remaining *Bloodstones*. If they do, they prove to the goddess once and for all that she can put her faith in the Knights of Lastwall and their allies. If they refuse, Arazni's heart hardens against the knights, perhaps forever. With a scowl, Arazni disappears to consider plans of vengeance against both the heroes and the knights.

Assuming the heroes willingly give the *Bloodstones* to her, Arazni smiles and departs. The next time the heroes awaken, each of them discovers the petal of a lotus flower beneath their pillow. Crushing the petal in a time of great need allows the hero to call Arazni to their side.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With Arazni's *Bloodstones* returned to her, the goddess has taken another step toward securing her independence and freedom. As the revelation that Arazni is the source of the Crimson Oath's power spreads throughout Golarion, many who had written her off as irredeemable begin to reconsider their previous prejudices against the goddess. Those who accept that Arazni's history is a complex tale told across centuries might even begin to regard her as a deity worthy of devotion—or at least respect.

Failing to stop Seldeg's ritual has devastating effects for Golarion. The lives of Arazni and Iomedae are interwoven and tied inextricably to the divine power of Aroden's former domains. While Seldeg's ritual fails to switch their fates completely, it alters the histories of both goddesses in ways the graveknight never could have anticipated. The goddesses each lose part of their divinity in the process. Those who place their faith in either Arazni or Iomedae awaken to find their connection to their former goddess unsteady. The panic sparked by this sudden loss of reliability of their divine power is no less than that caused by the passing of Aroden himself.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

Despite the layers of grime and ash staining the white marble towers and golden domes of Vellumis, the port city remains a shining jewel and welcome respite from the desolation of the Gravelands. From within its high walls, the Knights of Lastwall work to usher those in need of rescue to vessels capable of offering flight from the hordes of Tar-Baphon.

HISTORY

Vellumis's history is steeped in war. Originally founded as a small lakeside port town called Watchmoor, the town was centered around a watchtower called simply the Light that acted as a navigational beacon for those lost in Lake Encarthan's thick night mists. Watchmoor numbered among the large swaths of land conquered by Tar-Baphon's initial push into the region.

In 3754 AR, the united forces of the Shining Crusade landed in what remained of Watchmoor, rekindled the Light, and renamed the town Vellumis. The settlement quickly became the crusade's main foothold in their struggle against the lich, rapidly growing into a large city full of knights and port traders. Vellumis was rebuilt with white marbles and domes in the era's popular Chelaxian "Old White" style, and over the years, many of its landmarks were renamed after the crusade's heroes and legends.

When Lastwall fell in 4719, the remaining Lastwall residents and Knights of Ozem used Vellumis as a staging ground for escape from the darkening Gravelands. Strife and destruction followed in their wake, but the original beacon of hope, now called the Inheritor's Light, became a rally point for the knighthood as they worked to reestablish their organization.

GEOGRAPHY

Rocky beaches and shoals make up the majority of the Vellumis coastline, with thin, arable grasslands sloping up into low hills. While Vellumis's lands made for easy construction, the natural breakwaters ideal for building an inner harbor attracted the initial settlement and later military use.

GOVERNMENT

Before the fall of Lastwall, a lord mayor ruling from Castle Varitan led Vellumis alongside a knight consul from the Knights of Ozem. The lord mayor's office had an advisory council filled with representatives from each district, which held no real power.

After the fall of Lastwall, the reformed knighthood took over greater administrative duties under the

VELLUMIS

CITY

Bustling port city and the last refuge for Gravelands survivors; headquarters of the Knights of Lastwall.

Government Council

Population 10,418 (60% humans, 10% elves, 9% orcs, 7% dwarves, 6% dromaars, 5% goblins, 3% other)

Languages Common, Varisian

Religions Arazni, Iomedae, Pharasma, Sarenrae

Threats Belkzen raiding parties, highway banditry, undead hordes, Whispering Way cultists

Last Crusade Vellumis houses some of the most pious and skilled smiths within the knighthood's ranks. Divine items, armors, and weapons of up to level 12 can be purchased or crafted in its markets and smithies.

Aylunna Varvatos (respected female human cleric 14) High Cleric of the Ivory Basilica, Second Sword Knight of Iomedae

Clarethe Iomedar (fervent nonbinary human vindicator 15) Sunset Angel, Knight of the Crimson Oath

Cray Darahan (vengeful male aiuvarin knight 6) protector of Steadfast

Janatimo (wise male aiuvarin bard 14) leader of the Vellumis Scholars

Kalabrynn Iomedar (determined female human paladin of Iomedae 18) advisor to the Knights of Lastwall

SETTLEMENT 7

influence of Aylunna Varvatos. She restructured the governing body as an 11-seat council, each member having an equal vote. Each district elects a council member, and the final two seats of the council are filled by the castellan of Castle Varitan (usually a respected knight) and a representative of the Knights of Lastwall.

PEOPLE OF VELLUMIS

Vellumis's populace, colloquially called Vellumites, are a mix of knights, retainers, tradespeople, merchants, and now refugees from throughout the Gravelands. The city's population steadily rises thanks to the illusion of safety brought by the presence of powerful people like Kalabrynn Iomedar, one of the greatest heroes of the Knights of Lastwall, and Aylunna Varvatos.

Most of the city's population is human, the remainder being a mix of elves, dwarves, orcs, and even a small percentage of goblins. It's unfortunate that the city's diversity has only increased—and continues to

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



increase—due to the devastating troubles in the region, but it speaks to Vellumis's status as a refugee city that its new citizens have not only been treated fairly and kindly by the original populace, but have been welcomed with open arms.

Notable Personalities

Duimar Vant (stern nonbinary human rogue 9) became the venture-captain of Uscalin Lodge when the city needed them most. When fires raged across Vellumis, the lodge's sitting venture-captain, Shevar Besnik, left his lodge in the hands of his treacherous second, Viora Skedrin, while he went out to aid the city. Viora attempted to sow discord and profit off the chaos with the help of demonic forces, only to be foiled by Pathfinders who were working to help refugees escape. Shevar perished before he could return to his post, leading Ustalav's venture-captain Evni Zongnoss to look for a replacement. She found Duimar, one of her trusted lieutenants, organizing a group of survivors at Castle Varitan. Seeing Duimar's leadership and compassion, Evni put them in charge of the lodge.

When Lastwall fell, **Cray Darahan** (vengeful male aiuvirin knight 6) went along with a cohort of knights into the thick of the Gravelands to staff the vacant watchtowers dotting the wilderness, hoping to reclaim some of the land lost to the undead. The mission was a failure, with Cray the only survivor. Wounded and guilt-ridden, Cray spent a year among refugees in a small town called Steadfast, training them to survive until reinforcements came to deliver them from hordes of undead, all the while quietly hoping to raise a force strong enough to take back the tower that cost him the lives of his comrades. When the Steadfast citizenry was finally rescued, Cray returned to Vellumis with a group of refugees and conscripted soldiers with hopes of starting a campaign to retake the lands to the south.

LOCATIONS IN VELLUMIS

As the crusaders developed Vellumis into their strategic position on Lake Encarthan, they built the city's famous towering white walls and fortress, Castle Varitan, to house and train knights and offer defense to the walled city. The city was initially separated into three districts for easy administration. Eventually, Lakeside was split into two districts, and Newdock was added as a fifth district, reaching out into Lake Encarthan. Over the centuries, Vellumis's population exceeded what the city walls could protect, causing four larger districts to rise outside of the protection of the city's walls.

Eastlake

Eastlake is the eastern half of the former Lakeside District, spanning from the Valorous Gate to the eastern wall of Vellumis. This wealthy neighborhood with clean streets and modest homes also houses most of the city's places of worship. The area is particularly known as the local center for the rising worship of Arazni, with several small shrines dedicated to her.

Cafe Maroon: This small cafe sits nestled between two high-cost clothing stores on a quiet street. A modest maroon sign above the door displays a simple white tea set; this is the iconic storefront of Cafe Maroon, the best place in the city to taste something new. While it features the finest coffees and teas from across Golarion, its real purpose is as a Crimson Reclaimers hangout. Members meet to discuss missions, objectives, and world events that influence their cause. They prize this location for its magically

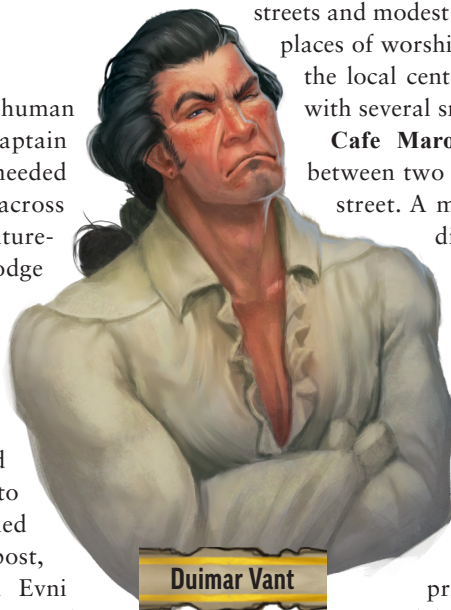
quieted booths that prevent nosy neighbors from listening to others' conversations. The cafe is run by **Maritan Harlin** (finicky nonbinary aiuvirin bard 5), who takes great pride in their exquisite taste and Taldan Lion Blade training. They personally select the daily offerings of beverages, tiny sandwiches, and live music as well as listen to patrons' opinions with grave seriousness, lest they miss a trend.

The Dawn's Glimmer: **Nelle Mullonap** (timid female halfling cleric of Sarenrae 4) of the Almas Mullonaps opened this small jewelry store specializing in dawnsilver adornments just before Tar-Baphon's escape from Gallowspire. It survived the siege of Vellumis with little damage and continues to provide wares to the city's upper class. Since the attack, she's expanded her offerings to concealable dawnsilver weapons and fashionable talismans focused on protection.

Ivory Basilica: Of the 18 churches dotting the city, the Ivory Basilica stands as the largest, most ornate, and most popular of the holy temples. Built upon the site of Iomedae's quarters while mustering in Vellumis, the Ivory Basilica is Eastlake's largest structure and the highest ranking of the city's three Iomedae churches. Under Aylunna Varvatos's leadership, the church takes an active part in city administration and offers succor to all knights, no matter their faith.

Eastwatch

Eastwatch originally grew from the Eastlake expansion past the basalt walls protecting the city. Over the years, it became notorious for a degree of criminal activity far from the city guard barracks in the Tower District. However, whenever crisis befalls the city, even the worst



Duimar Vant

of the hardened criminals in Eastwatch can be called upon to help defend Vellumis.

Eastside Docks: The Eastside docks were built in recent years for use by those avoiding Vellumis's docking fees and the eyes of the city guard. Authorities have tried time and again to rid the city of the docks and the criminal elements they support, but no matter what methods are used to disassemble them, within days they're always somehow rebuilt and ready to take in ships.

Endless Eats: Endless Eats is a notoriously cheap eatery where low-grade fish and other seafood products are magically purified for consumption. While there's a small variety of meal options, such as fried oysters and roasted skewers, the eatery is best known for its "fish gravy," a porridge of mixed seafood served with hearty bread. Most diners bring their own condiments and sides, trading with each other or throwing everything together to make new meal combinations.

Fair Feathered Ranch: To help rebuild the cavalry of the Knights of Lastwall, Castle Varitan granted use of a ranch to **Persival Widdershins** (innovative male human scholar 5) after the ranch's owner and livestock were all killed during the siege of Vellumis. The young scholar wanted to put his theories on axebeak genealogy to the test and is using the ranch to breed a new kind of axebeak. So far, the project is going well, but there was an incident where a few dozen hatchlings escaped the ranch and ran amok in the city before they were captured and returned.

Treasured Things General Store: This simple shop carries everything from pitons to pears and has served the Eastwatch community for generations. While visitors find it to be a convenient one-stop shop for everything they need on their travels, most don't know of its true source of revenue: rare goods. **Barty Durnam** (crafty male human smuggler 9) runs the shop and has access to an extensive network of secret dealers, able to supply rare foodstuffs such as chocolate or pineapples within a day or two. For those willing to pay, he also provides potent poisons and other illegal paraphernalia. His ability to supply those with power the exclusive items they desire has kept him off the guards' radar and in continued operation.

Embassy District

The Embassy District is made up of diplomatic residences and administrative buildings standing alongside restaurants and shops built specifically to cater to the diverse diplomatic envoys and visiting nobility that frequent the district or the castle.

Castle Varitan: Named for an early Shining Crusade general, Castle Varitan is the seat of the Vellumis

Council as well as the main defense for the city. It houses several hundred knights at a time and remains at the ready for any sort of large-scale assault.

Freedom's Hall: Once a bustling embassy for the nation of Andoran, Freedom's Hall was sabotaged by enemies during the fires that spread through Vellumis in 4719. While the building was liberated, Andoran has yet to reclaim its embassy. According to rumors, the gray dinge of ash that still covers the building and most of the district is a sign of devils that remain hidden somewhere within its walls.

Gilded Tongue: Gilded Tongue is a high-end cafe owned by **Kalira Devnan** (aloof male elf chef 8), who's famous for creating whimsical meals, such as pastries shaped like dragons that squeeze fiery, sweet chili jam from their jaws. Wondrous ingredients and tantalizing smells fill this beautiful restaurant, though no one is allowed to sit at the single rotting wooden table in the far left corner.

The Valorous Gardens: A gift to Vellumis from Queen Gendowyn, ruler of the fey court of the Fangwood, the thickly forested Valorous Gardens remain beautiful and lush year-round. However, the gardens have proven dangerous, as inattentive visitors can become lost for days or weeks—even if the lost visitor only experienced a few hours going by. The knights have considered razing the gardens but haven't taken action due to the defense the gardens provide the ramp to Castle Varitan as well as due to the pride the people of Vellumis feel for their city's personal enchanted forest.

Honor's Field

This part of the city began as wheat and barley fields tended by the farmers and squires of Northwatch. The farms and granaries were razed during the fires of the fall of Lastwall and were replaced by a large shantytown built by those in need. Refugees soon flocked to Honor's Field, with field hospitals popping up on every block. Unfortunately, recent outbreaks of supernatural diseases have made Honor's Field considerably less safe.

Pristine Produce: This farm and grocery stand raises and sells all their own products, which are proudly grown on several small plots behind the storefront. The proprietor, **Amus Derstrum** (ambitious male human alchemist 3), uses special plant food and pesticides to keep his crops big, delicious, and pest free. He even has a "proprietary blend" used for composting high-quality soil. While some of the shop's couriers have reported seeing "a rotting hand" sticking out of the compost bin, the guards have yet to investigate. If they did, they



Amus Derstrum

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX





KEY

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. The Valorous Gate | 18. Cafe Maroon |
| 2. Herald's Tower | 19. The Dawn's Glimmer |
| 3. Castle Varitan | 20. Ustalin Lodge |
| 4. Valorous Gardens | 21. Quick Plate |
| 5. Freedom's Hall | 22. The Big Bowl |
| 6. Glided Tongue | 23. Timber Town |
| 7. The Endless Page | 24. Griffon Reach |
| 8. Everyday Magic | 25. The Old Apple Orchard |
| 9. Laborer's Market | 26. Road of Welcome |
| 10. Smith & Machinae | 27. Pristine Produce |
| 11. The Dead Alleys | 28. Queenie's Combs |
| 12. Dirgespire | 29. Respite Row |
| 13. Temple of Abadar | 30. Eastside Docks |
| 14. Cinderland Brews | 31. Endless Eats |
| 15. Inheritor's Light | 32. Fair Feathered Ranch |
| 16. Three Hearth Inn | 33. Treasured Things General Store |
| 17. Ivory Basilica | |

might discover that Amus has been composting undead corpses in a mix of soil and rotting plants from nearby Roslar's Coffin.

Queenie's Combs: The fires and smoke from the siege of Vellumis devastated the local bee population.

Queenie (friendly female sunflower leshy beekeeper 5) has been working hard to preserve the bees she can find and bring them to her apiary. Her honey is given freely to refugees and locals, while she sells just enough to merchants and restaurants to pay local taxes. She keeps a few giant bees to act as a deterrent to robbers; the bees purposely leave nasty welts in prominent places on their victims so robbers can be identified later. Some claim Queenie is teaching the bees how to spell, so she can truly shame those who try to steal from her by branding them with curse words.

Respite Row: Respite Row is an open-air market run by squires and permanent citizens to help incoming refugees find food and clothing. It acts as a de facto district administration hub to help refugees settle in and find employment, and it also serves as a recruiting center for possible squires.

Newdock

Newdock was constructed from the remains of the rocky shoal that originally protected the harbor as the crusaders and city builders refined Vellumis's cothon. Newdock is made up of dockside taverns, warehouses, and housing for the sailors, traders, and travelers who come to the port city in anything other than a military capacity. The district has a reputation for roguishness and criminal activity due to its limited guard presence.

Cinderland Brews: This brewery and tavern hosts some of the loudest, most dangerous, and most entertaining bar fights in Vellumis, with several regulars gaining minor celebrity status for their fighting prowess. Despite—or perhaps due to—the raucous violence, Cinderland Brews is one of the most successful establishments in the district.

Cartag the Ruthless (brash male orc brewmaster 6) and **Screaming Thunder** (fearless female Shoanti human brawler 6) opened the tavern in 4701 shortly after their marriage, a ceremony that concluded in an infamous citywide brawl. Despite their reputation for violence, the proprietors make sure to keep the streets clear of trouble and innocents out of danger with the catchphrase, “Keep it all within the walls.” The couple takes care of most of the tavern's needs, with their five children helping out during their free time, taking orders and tending to the fermenting brews in the cellar.

The Inheritor's Light: The Inheritor's Light is one of the tallest structures in Vellumis, second only to the Herald's Tower. Its light can be seen for miles around,

even in the thickest fogs rolling off the lake. Vellumites claim that so long as the tower's light glows, the city will always stand, and so far no forces have succeeded in challenging that belief.

Three Hearths Inn: Since 4592 AR, the Hestram family has run this large inn specializing in hospitality and community. The latest innkeeper is **Lyra Hestram** (gracious female Ulfen human innkeeper 8), who has taken charge of both the business and the family for the past 32 years. The spacious common room with long community tables and three hearths serves platters of hearty food to groups for a single silver piece at the door; single meals don't exist at the Three Hearths Inn, and solo diners are quickly swept up into a group. Visitors can eat and drink their fill so long as they're participating in the conversation and merriment.

The top two floors of this three-story building feature small rooms with lounging furniture and games, while the rooftop lounge is particularly popular with visitors who like to watch ships traverse the bay.

Northwatch

Northwatch began as a place for tradesfolk to live and work outside the city walls while remaining close to the protection offered by the city, ready to barricade themselves within Vellumis's walls the moment danger approached. In recent years, retired veterans put down roots here, where they remain close to show their dedication and readiness to defend the city.

The Big Bowl: Among the refugees seeking shelter from undead terrors in Vellumis is **Baba Baev** (matronly female human witch 4), who traveled to the city with her large family and a scraggly orange cat called Pushok. Seeing the endless number of hungry mouths around her and the restless hands of children with no duties to attend, Baba Baev gathered a group of children and sent them on a mission to bring her ingredients for “Baba Baev's magic stew.” Thanks to some sly spellwork, Baev's stew is always delicious no matter the ingredients, though she always loudly claims that it's because of her loving touch. The Big Bowl has become a staple of Northwatch, and visitors to the district often glimpse children running to deliver new items to add to the magic stew.

Griffon Reach: For a brief time, these fields were dedicated to training griffons and airborne troops when Korvosa's Sable Company lent their aid to Lastwall. Once that relationship soured, the knights took to using the grounds for cavalry training and mustering outside the city walls, with only the name of the fields remaining as a reminder of the beasts that once soared in the skies above.



Glorine Velski

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX



The Old Apple Orchard: While this ancient orchard has been given several names over the centuries, most just call it “the old apple orchard.” A peculiar woman, **Glorine Velski** (eccentric female changeling druid 8), maintains the grounds and is the sole proprietor of the orchard’s unusually delicious apples. Some want to remove the old woman from her position, as locals report her talking to the trees for long periods of time and claim that she isn’t good for business, but the knights are wary of intervening when Glorine has never caused any known issues. Glorine can occasionally be found at the Laborer’s Market selling apples or at the Valorous Gardens arguing with the roses.

Road of Welcome: Before the return of the Whispering Tyrant, when knights still patrolled the cold hills and prairies of Lastwall, visitors would travel to and from Vellumis bringing trade and happiness. They’d often head to Arnisant’s Avenue from the northwest of town, through the north gate into the Embassy District, and loop back when they left. As this pattern emerged, so too did a row of shops, inns, and taverns along the road just outside the wall, catering to anyone who came through. The area gained the nickname “Road of Welcome” and was one of the most prosperous sections of the city. Now it stands mostly abandoned, with ruined buildings all that remains of the once vibrant neighborhood. Rumors say that childlike ghosts haunt the road and welcome travelers to their deaths, locking them in cellars until they perish, with no one to hear their screams throughout the night.

Timber Town: Due to the recent influx of refugees, several homes are being built all at once. While these projects likely won’t be fully completed for years, many refugees have decided to start occupying half-built homes with nary a drop of paint or artistic flare. This practice has given rise to the nickname “Timber Town,” as folks here are accustomed to seeing the naked wooden walls of these hastily built shelters.

Tower District

The Tower District is a comfortable neighborhood of homes for merchants and city officials. The City Guard has their barracks and a pair of jails for holding prisoners awaiting court dates in the castle. Those found guilty often find work for the city under the guard’s watch in the Tower District, while the worst criminals are remanded to the dungeons beneath Castle Varitan, though rumors persist that these criminals are often drafted into mercenary work for the Knights.

Herald’s Tower: On a small island in the middle of the Valorous Gate’s harbor, Herald’s Tower rises many stories above the highest spire or hill for miles around. Through magic and elevation, nothing is hidden to the eyes of those who peer from the top of the gleaming white tower; every pass into and out of the city, every boat sailing its way, and every knight rising to meet

their enemy for miles around can be seen as clearly as if they were in the next chamber.

The Quick Plate: The Quick Plate is an eatery that caters to merchants and officials in a rush to eat well before returning to their duties. Each table has a single plate that quickly materializes a hearty meal based on the diner’s personal tastes. It’s unknown how the Quick Plate produces its meals or anticipates what meals are desired, with competing conspiracies claiming that the anonymous owner is a jathoom, fey chef, or mortal who made a deal with a devil.

Ustalin Lodge: Ustalin Lodge is the local outpost of the Pathfinder Society and once shared its building with the Ace of Dreams, a gambling house that had locals questioning the true intentions of the Pathfinders. In the wake of the refugee crisis, Venture-Captain Duimar Vant had the local Pathfinders fully convert the building into a shelter for anyone without a home, reserving only a few meeting rooms for Pathfinder business. The lodge is also a crucial stopping point for Pathfinder agents making their way up to Belkzen or Ustalay, who often trade supplies with local agents and exchange news about the greater organization.

The Valorous Gate: The Valorous Gate is a pair of harbors constructed from the rocky shoal that protected the port city before the knights arrived. A rectangular merchant harbor is protected from invaders by a breakwater in its mouth, with a circular cothon surrounding the Herald’s Tower for military vessels.

Westlake

Westlake is the western half of the venerable Lakeside District spanning from the Valorous Gate to the western city wall, although the district has always been considered to be separate from the wealthier Eastlake. This district is where the majority of Vellumis’s working class find affordable homes, and where civil unrest is most likely to occur.

The Endless Page: The Endless Page is a bookstore filled with every tome imaginable, from seductive romances to weathered copies of classic prophecies. It’s best known for its small stage where employees and volunteers reenact stories as entertainment, but it has recently become a place for young refugees to get their schooling. While the youths learn to read and write, the adults are interviewed about their personal histories, which are in turn recorded by the employees so that every individual’s story can be remembered.

Everyday Magic: This magic shop mostly sells low-level potions, low-ranking spell scrolls, enchanted trinkets, or the occasional *wand of ant haul* to an overeager dock worker. **Felandriel Longshadow** (forlorn male elf wizard 12) runs the store, hoping to add a bit of magical convenience to his neighbor’s lives. Felandriel’s neighbors whisper pityingly that his efforts are just a way to distract himself from thoughts of his

lost sister. Felandriel is known to enchant the occasional weapon for knights but much prefers to spend his time teaching magic to eager youths. The young people who can be glimpsed practicing spells in the shop during Felandriel's off-hours either can't afford to go to the Arcanamirium, Felandriel's alma mater, or have other obligations preventing them from pursuing a formal magical education.

Laborer's Market: This open-air market is adjacent to the merchant docks of the Valorous Gate. Outside of the abundance of affordable foods and goods, nearly every uprising in Vellumis began in this very market. Recently, passionate rabble-rousers have used it as a stage to stir up heated political discussions and make demands of the government, resulting in increased guard patrols. Though many despise these individuals and view them as troublemakers, each day more and more of Vellumis's citizens have started agreeing with the dissidents.

Smith & Machinae: **Grisom Bullah** (creative male human inventor 7) moved from Alkenstar to peddle his trade and regularly traverses the abandoned Westwatch district for salvageable scrap. Grisom repurposes and transforms what he can find to create wagon axles, horseshoes, and fantastic machinery for the people of Vellumis. While he fills the occasional order for weapons or armor, his passion is turning abandoned metal into fantastic yet practical items. Visitors are cautioned not to try and make small talk with the man lest they get scowled out of his shop. As his age catches up to him, Grisom has found himself reluctantly hiring adventurers to go out and comb Westwatch for useful materials in his place.

Westwatch

Westwatch was originally a mercantile district that catered to traveling merchants, but the district is now largely abandoned, having suffered the greatest losses to Tar-Baphon's victory.

The Dead Alleys: While most of Westwatch is uninhabited, the Dead Alleys see the dead rising at night to seek out the stragglers surviving in the ruined district. No matter how hard the knights fight to clear the alleys, these undead denizens always return when night falls. Why a group of knights famed for battling the undead hasn't been able to quell this threat has been of great concern to the citizens, with some whispering conspiratorially that the knights purposely leave the undead as a reminder that the locals need the knights.

Dirgespire: Two years before Vigil fell, **Calliope Longshadow** (mournful female banshee 17) purchased a plot of residential land on the shores of Lake Encarthan. A week later, a tall tower had constructed itself out of carts full of lumber, stone, and steel. The reclusive Calliope and her brother lived here together until the undead hordes attacked Vellumis. On that terrible day,

Felandriel was within the walls working at his shop and Calliope was in the tower. It's said that undead invaded the tower but never came out, and neither did Calliope. Ever since that incident, the door has been sealed to everyone, even Felandriel. Some say they see an elven maiden at the top of the tower singing such a beautiful song that they become weak and unable to stand, earning the tower its new moniker of Dirgespire.

The Temple of Abadar: When the district was abandoned, several high-ranking priests from the Temple of Abadar chose to stay and protect their vaults. When knights came to retrieve the priests, no one remained to save; there were no traces of any living being, nor the gold or property deeds they'd vowed to defend. Several adventurers have attempted to approach the site to "rescue" the missing priests and their wealth of gold, but none have ever returned. The site is rumored to be haunted by the missing priests, who slay any who would come to steal from them and their god.

The Three Sisters: If one wanders Westwatch with a burning wish in their heart, it's said that they might come across a peculiar shop run by three sisters who look nothing alike. One sister will grant a wish of love, the other a wish of fear, and the last a wish of vengeance. Those who claim to have been to the shop say its prices are too high to bear, but it hasn't stopped desperate individuals from searching the ruins of Westwatch for any chance of gaining their heart's desire.

VELLUMIS HINTERLANDS

The following locations are outside of the city, but close enough to fall under its influence.

Arnisant Bay: Over a thousand years ago during the Shining Crusade, General Arnisant landed at this secluded bay during a storm. The crusaders originally used it as a shipbuilding port, but during the fall of Lastwall, the bay and its docks fell to the Whispering Tyrant's forces.

Corlach Keep: Corlach once controlled much of the Pineflow River's travel. During the evacuation of Lastwall, the keep's knights abandoned it in their escape to Vellumis. The keep's proximity to Vellumis and other local trade towns make it a point of concern since it's likely riddled with undead that could spread out in any direction.

Misty Crossing: As a result of nearby waterfalls and rapids, Misty Crossing is a challenging place to sail upriver, but the perpetual mists that hug the waterway make it ideal for illicit trade.

Yua's Hope: A small trade town a few days east of Vellumis, Yua's Hope was razed centuries ago by the Knights of Ozem in response to Whispering Way activity. It had only begun to return to open trade when Lastwall fell to Tar-Baphon's forces. For more on Yua's Hope in its current state, see "Gravelands Survivors" starting on page 12.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

Claws of the Tyrant is an anthology of adventures focused on matters of faith, religion, and the gods. Several artifacts feature prominently in the adventures. In addition, either during character creation or as play progresses, the PCs can gain access to feats that represent their specialized religious training.

ARTIFACTS

The following divine artifacts play a role, either directly or indirectly, in all three adventures in *Claws of the Tyrant*.

Bloodstones of Arazni

The lids of these four canopic jars are carved to resemble the skulls of hideous monsters. Dried blood coats the outside of the jars, and the jars themselves feel warm to the touch. Each jar contains one of Arazni's organs, removed from her when Geb forcibly transformed her into a lich. Geb used the *Bloodstones* to control Arazni until the Knights of Ozem liberated the *Bloodstones* and hid them throughout the then-nation of Lastwall. Since then, Arazni has been on the hunt for the artifacts, as they remain a symbol of her time under the Ghost King's control, and they might still possess the power to bind her again today.

After Arazni's ascension to godhood, the remains of her physical body changed. Whereas they once possessed a vestige of Aroden's power, the *Bloodstones* are now imbued with a fraction of Arazni's divinity. Those who worship Arazni or are favored by her can invoke the power of the *Bloodstones* by tapping into the goddess's will.

HEART BLOODSTONE OF ARAZNI

ARTIFACT 11

UNIQUE ARTIFACT DIVINE

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

The *Heart Bloodstone of Arazni* represents protection. While holding the *Heart Bloodstone*, you can feel the gentle rhythm of a beating heart within the jar.

Activate—Raise Jar ♦ (manipulate) You hold the jar aloft, and a nimbus of crimson energy surrounds your body. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to AC until the start of your next turn.

Activate—Proclaim Resilience ♦♦ (concentrate) **Frequency** once per day; **Requirements** You worship Arazni or are favored by her; **Effect** You make a loud and clear proclamation of your resilience (such as "I will not fall to the hands of my

enemies!"). You gain resistance to void damage equal to your level until the beginning of your next turn.

Destruction The *Heart Bloodstone* turns to dust if a worshipper of Arazni is slain while holding the *Bloodstone* and cursing her name. Any breathing creature within 10 feet of the jar inhales the choking dust, taking 4d6 void damage (DC 28 basic Fortitude save). On a failure, the creature also takes 4 persistent void damage (8 persistent void damage on a critical failure).

LIVER BLOODSTONE OF ARAZNI

ARTIFACT 11

UNIQUE ARTIFACT DIVINE

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

The *Liver Bloodstone of Arazni* represents confidence. While holding the *Liver Bloodstone*, you feel more certain in your abilities.

Activate—Embolden ↻ (concentrate)

Frequency once per hour; **Trigger** You critically succeed on an attack roll, saving throw, or skill check while in encounter mode; **Effect** You gain temporary Hit Points equal to your level for 1 round.

Activate—Arazni's Fervor ♦♦ (concentrate, manipulate)

Frequency once per day; **Requirements** You worship Arazni or are favored by her; **Effect** You hold the *Liver Bloodstone* aloft, and the *Bloodstone* glows with crimson light, filling you and your allies with Arazni's wrath. The *Liver Bloodstone* casts *bleed*. For the next minute, you can use a free action at the beginning of each of your turns to increase the spell's emanation radius by 10 feet. You can't increase the emanation's radius in any other way.

Destruction The *Liver Bloodstone* melts into a puddle of poison if a worshipper of Arazni willingly submerges the *Bloodstone* in a lethal contact or consumed poison, then licks the *Bloodstone* clean. Each creature in a 15-foot emanation is exposed to the poison that destroyed the *Bloodstone*, as if they'd touched or consumed that poison.

LUNG BLOODSTONE OF ARAZNI

ARTIFACT 11

UNIQUE ARTIFACT DIVINE

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

The *Lung Bloodstone of Arazni* represents suffering. While you carry the *Lung Bloodstone*, you gain the ability to turn your pain into a weapon against your enemies.

Activate—Strength Through Pain ↻ (concentrate) **Frequency** once per hour; **Trigger** You take damage; **Effect** You allow the pain to resonate within you, making you stronger. You



CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX

gain a +1 status bonus to your next Strike or spell attack before the end of your next turn.

Activate—Admonish ♦♦ (auditory, emotion, incapacitation, mental) **Requirements** You worship Arazni or are favored by her; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You point your finger at a creature within 60 feet that has wronged you, and you verbally admonish them. The creature takes 1d4 mental damage for every level you have (basic Will save against your class DC). On a failed save, the creature is also stunned 1 (stunned 3 on a critical failure).

Destruction To destroy the *Lung Bloodstone*, a worshipper of Arazni must willingly impale himself with the *Bloodstone's* horned figurehead, dealing themselves 3d6 piercing damage and 3d6 persistent bleed damage. The *Lung Bloodstone* then evaporates into a cloud of noxious vapors, as *toxic cloud* (DC 28), that follows the creature that destroyed the *Bloodstone* for its duration.

SPLEEN BLOODSTONE OF ARAZNI

ARTIFACT 11

UNIQUE ARTIFACT DIVINE

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

The *Spleen Bloodstone of Arazni* represents freedom. Holding the *Spleen Bloodstone* makes you feel as if no bonds can contain you.

Activate—Sure Footing ♦ to ♦♦♦ (concentrate) **Requirements** You aren't immobilized; **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** You Step or Stride, treating both difficult and greater difficult terrain as normal terrain during the movement. For each additional action you spend, you can Step or Stride again with the same benefits. If you have a climb or fly Speed, you can instead Climb or Fly respectively.

Activate—Break Bonds ♦ (concentrate) **Requirements** You worship Arazni or are favored by her; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The confused, controlled, grabbed, immobilized, paralyzed, petrified, and restrained conditions, as well as any Speed penalties affecting you, immediately end unless the effect is magical and of 12th level or higher. You can use this ability even if your actions are restricted or otherwise decided for you (such as being confused or controlled).

Destruction If a worshipper of Arazni willingly gains the controlled condition or becomes undead while holding the *Spleen Bloodstone*, the *Bloodstone* explodes, dealing 10d6 force damage to all creatures in a 20-foot emanation (DC 28 basic Reflex save).

Chalice of Ozem

This fine dawnsilver chalice is studded with dozens of rubies, and the finely wrought decorative patterns on the outside of the cup still contain flecks of Iomedae's blood. When Tar-Baphon first attempted to conquer Avistan, the knight protectors of the city of Ozem fled

with the *Chalice of Ozem*. Centuries later, the relic was handed down to the mortal Iomedae, who used it in a critical battle against Erum-Hel, one of the Whispering Tyrant's most fearsome lieutenants. Since Iomedae's ascension, the *Chalice of Ozem* has become an artifact in its own right.

CHALICE OF OZEM

ARTIFACT 11

UNIQUE ARTIFACT DIVINE

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

This ruby-studded dawnsilver chalice can't be harmed by any substance it holds, no matter how caustic. Furthermore, liquid placed within the *Chalice of Ozem* never spills unless its carrier chooses to do so (using a single action with the concentrate trait).

Activate—Iomedae's Blessing ♦♦

(concentrate, manipulate) **Frequency** once

per hour; **Effect** You hold the chalice and call out Iomedae's name. The chalice casts *dispelling globe*

with a +19 modifier to its counteract check.

Destruction If the *Chalice of Ozem* is filled with Iomedae's blood and Arazni drinks from it, it shatters.

HALCYON SPEAKER

The following feats are made available to PCs with the halcyon speaker archetype (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Character Guide* 104) during these adventures.

SHATTERED SACRAMENT

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Halcyon Speaker Dedication (*Character Guide* 104), Cascade Bearer's Spellcasting (*Character Guide* 103)

When Vigil fell to Tar-Baphon's *Radiant Fire*, that lost innocence brought you a deeper understanding of what faith means in the context of your own magic. When you cast a halcyon spell, you can choose for it to be a divine spell instead of arcane or primal. You gain a halcyon cantrip and a 1st-rank halcyon spell.

SPEAK FOR THE GRAVELANDS

FEAT 14

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Halcyon Speaker Dedication (*Character Guide* 104), trained in Nature, can cast at least one spell with the vitality trait

Access You're a member of the Vellumis Scholars.

You have learned much of what the Gravelands need and are confident in your ability to speak for them. You gain the Geomancer Dedication archetype feat (*Pathfinder Secrets of Magic* 212), even if you normally couldn't take another dedication feat until you take more feats from your current archetype. You can benefit from the following Gravelands terrain attunement when in the Gravelands.

Gravelands (vitality) You gain a +1 status bonus to saving throws against the spells and abilities of haunts and undead creatures for 1 round.

VELLUMIS EXCISION

FEAT 16

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Halcyon Spellcasting Adept (*Character Guide* 105)

Access You're a member of the Vellumis Scholars.

You seek to excise the rot from the Gravelands and have made progress to do so. You can cast *field of life* as a 6th-rank halcyon spell, and you gain a 6th-rank halcyon spell slot. When you cast your halcyon *field of life* as a primal spell, any living creatures in the area when you Sustain the spell gain a +2 status bonus to saving throws against curses, diseases, and poisons for 1 round.

Special If you have the Halcyon Spellcasting Sage feat, you treat the *field of life* halcyon spell gained from this feat as a signature spell, even though halcyon spells normally can't be signature spells.

TRIPARTITE OMEN

FEAT 18

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Dualistic Synergy (*Character Guide* 104), Shattered Sacrament (page 110), master in Religion

You invoke religious portents to ward yourself against danger without losing sight of the history that led to this point. When you use Dualistic Synergy, if your next action is to Cast a Spell from your spell slots and that spell is divine, you gain a +1 status bonus to AC for 1 round. If the spell is a halcyon spell, you gain this benefit in addition to the benefits described in Dualistic Synergy.

VIGIL'S PALISADES

FEAT 20

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Persistent Creation (*Character Guide* 104)

When you use Persistent Creation, you can create up to three special wooden shields that provide a +2 circumstance bonus to AC and have Hardness 15, 120 HP, and BT 60. A creature that Raises a Shield made with your Persistent Creation also gains a +2 item bonus to saving throws while the shield is raised.

KNIGHT RECLAIMANT

The following feats are available to PCs with the knight reclaimant archetype (*Character Guide* 95) during these adventures.

GRAVE THREAT

FEAT 16

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Reaper of Repose (*Character Guide* 95)

You use your imposing demeanor to set up the undead for defeat.

Make a Strike against an undead creature using a weapon with which you have master proficiency. If you hit, all Strikes against that creature gain the benefits of Reaper of Repose for 1 round.

CUT THEM DOWN, BURN THEM OUT

FEAT 18

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Knight Reclaimant Dedication (*Character Guide* 95), master proficiency in a weapon

Inspired by the sixth line of the Crimson Oath, when you oppose the enemies of Lastwall, you aim to excise the rot from the land itself. Make a Strike against an undead creature using a weapon with which you have master proficiency. On a success, in addition to the attack's other effects, the creature takes a -2 status penalty to the DC of any curses, diseases, or poisons it can inflict for 1 round. On a critical success, the undead creature takes the -2 status penalty for 1 round, then a -1 status penalty for an additional round.



Knight Reclaimant

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

MAY DEATH ITSELF RECONSIDER

FEAT 20

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Reclaimant Plea (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Knights of Lastwall* 77)

Your will is so steadfast that even death can't stop you. You gain the ability to cast *breath of life* up to three times per day as a 5th-rank divine innate spell.

KNIGHT VIGILANT

The following feats are made available to PCs with the knight vigilant archetype (*Character Guide* 94) during these adventures.

RALLYING CHARGE

FEAT 16

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Knight Vigilant Dedication (*Character Guide* 94), Lead the Way (*Knights of Lastwall* 75)

When you lead your allies to the front lines, you leave no one behind. When you Lead the Way, instead of choosing one ally that has a reaction available, you can choose any number of allies within 10 feet of you. Any chosen allies that use their reaction to immediately Stride as part of you Leading the Way can end their Stride anywhere within 10 feet of you.

PRETERNATURAL POLISH

FEAT 16

ARCHETYPE | EXPLORATION | SKILL

Prerequisites Knight Vigilant Dedication (*Character Guide* 94), legendary in Crafting

Armor you polish shines with righteous grace. You can take 10 minutes to recite prayers or oaths while polishing a suit of heavy armor that you or a willing creature is wearing. If you do, attempt a DC 35 Crafting check with the following results. The armor then becomes temporarily immune to this ability until your next daily preparations.

Critical Success Once in the next hour, the creature wearing the polished armor can use a reaction to shine majestically. This reaction is triggered when they would be affected by a spell or ability with the darkness trait. The creature attempts a counteract check against the triggering effect using your Crafting modifier. Additionally, the creature wearing the polished armor gains an additional reaction at the start of each of their turns that can be only used for this reaction.

Success As critical success, but the creature wearing the polished armor doesn't gain an additional reaction at the start of each of their turns.

BODY BARRIER

FEAT 18

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Knight Vigilant Dedication (*Character Guide* 94)

Trigger You and at least one ally are in the area of an effect that requires a Reflex save.

When your allies are in danger, you don't hesitate to take the brunt of the blow for them. You grant all allies in the area standard cover against the triggering effect, and you gain weakness to all damage against the triggering effect equal to twice the number of allies that gain cover in this way.

LASTWALL SENTRY

The following feats are made available to PCs with the Lastwall sentry archetype (*Pathfinder Lost Omens World Guide* 47) during these adventures.

SPIRIT OF VIGIL

FEAT 18

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites No Stranger to Death (*Knights of Lastwall* 79)

Though the city of Vigil itself has been destroyed, you will carry on its warrior spirit to the end of your days. The value of your dying condition at which you die increases by 1 (normally to dying 5, or dying 6 if you have Diehard), and the reduction to your maximum dying value from the doomed condition is 1 less severe (to a minimum of 0).

UNCANNY VITAE

FEAT 18

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lastwall Sentry Dedication (*World Guide* 47)

Your warrior spirit is infused with a potent vital essence that imbues your gear. Any shield you wield treats its Hardness as 5 higher against damage dealt by undead creatures.

Lastwall Sentry

CENOTAPH STANCE ◆

FEAT 20

ARCHETYPE | STANCE

Prerequisites Lastwall Warden (*World Guide* 47)

Requirements You're wielding a shield.

You take on a stance that marks your location as a place where none will fall. When you enter this stance and at the beginning of each of your turns while in Cenotaph Stance, you gain 10 temporary Hit Points that last until the start of your next turn. If you move or are forced to move, you automatically leave Cenotaph Stance. While in Cenotaph Stance, you're treated as always having the required shield raised. In addition, you can use your Shield Block reaction when an ally within 15 feet of you takes physical damage, in addition to its normal trigger, thus preventing the ally from taking damage instead of you. Finally, you gain an additional reaction at the start of each of your turns that can be used only for Shield Block.

Special If you can use Shield Block to reduce damage that isn't physical damage (for instance, if you have the Bless Shield (*Knights of Lastwall* 78) or Necromantic Bulwark (*Knights of Lastwall* 79) feat), you can use your Shield Block reaction when an ally within 15 feet of you takes damage that you could prevent with Shield Block.

MAGAAMBYAN ATTENDANT

When the Whispering Tyrant escaped from his prison in Gallowspire to destroy Lastwall, members of the Magaambya were among the first to rush to the dying nation's aid. Magaambyans assist the Knights of Lastwall to this day. The following feats are made available to PCs with the Magaambyan attendant archetype (*Character Guide* 101) during these adventures.

ADEPT STORYTELLER

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Uzunjati Storytelling (*Character Guide* 102), master in a Recall Knowledge skill

Your ability to tell stories rivals those of the finest bards. You can use your proficiency rank in any skill that can be used to Recall Knowledge to meet the requirements of skill feats that require a particular rank in Performance. You gain two Performance skill feats of 7th level or lower that you meet the prerequisites for.

CAUTIOUS WORD ◆

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Uzunjati Storytelling (*Character Guide* 102), ability to cast *shield*

Frequency once per round

Trigger An enemy hits you with a Strike.

Requirements You're currently unable to cast *shield* because you used Shield Block with it.

You let your words defend you, just as your allies in the Vellumis Scholars defend through knowledge. You immediately cast *shield* and gain its bonus to AC even though you normally couldn't cast it, and you become slowed 1 for 1 round.

CRUSADER'S MASQUERADE ◆

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE | CONCENTRATE | SKILL

Prerequisites Mask Familiar (*Character Guide* 101), expert in Stealth

Requirements You're wearing your mask familiar in its mask form, and it has the skilled (Religion) familiar ability.

Your mask can hide you from the undead. You become concealed to undead using vision or lifesense, allowing you to Hide and Sneak without other sources of cover or concealment. This effect lasts only as long as you continue to take no actions other than to Hide, Sneak, Recall Knowledge, Command an Animal to direct your mask familiar, or other surreptitious actions. The GM determines which actions end the effect, but attacking, casting spells, activating items, and the like always do.

FAITH IN THE FALLEN

FEAT 16

UNCOMMON | ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Magaambyan Attendant Dedication (*Character Guide* 101)

Access You're a member of the Vellumis Scholars.

The Gravelands are full of fallen spirits seeking to move on, and you consider it your obligation to assist in that regard. You gain the ability to store spirit wisps in your body, becoming a living *spirit dwelling* (see the Exorcist archetype on page 22 of *Pathfinder Book of the Dead*). Each day during your daily preparations, your *spirit dwelling* attracts a spirit wisp who comes to dwell inside. If your *spirit dwelling* contains no wisps, you can spend 10 minutes in a minor ritual to cast your *spirit dwelling* around an area and attract another wisp. Additionally, you gain a spirit wisp when a haunt or incorporeal undead creature is destroyed within 30 feet of you.

You gain the Spirit Sanctification action.

Spirit Sanctification ◆ (concentrate, spellshape) **Cost** 1 spirit wisp; **Effect** You immediately purify a spirit, which grants you a protective blessing before it departs. If your next action is to cast a halcyon spell, you gain a +1 status bonus to saving throws as well as resistance to void damage equal to the rank of the halcyon spell. These effects last for 1 round.

Every day before your daily preparations, any spirit wisps remaining within your *spirit dwelling* from the previous day are purified and can continue along the River of Souls.

I KNEW THE HEROES

FEAT 18

ARCHETYPE | SKILL

Prerequisites Uzunjati Recollection (*Character Guide* 103), legendary in a Recall Knowledge Skill

Your stories aren't mere tales passed down from elder to youth or teacher to student. They're the lived experiences of those you've met, and they're the stuff of legend. When you use Uzunjati Recollection, if you're legendary in the skill you use to Recall Knowledge, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to the Recall Knowledge check, and the circumstance bonus to Uzunjati Storytelling (*Character Guide* 102) increases to +2.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



GRAVEYARD GUARDIANS

Engerras are protective of those whose memories they gather, using their stories as a weapon against anyone who would disturb their charge's final resting place. While they're most often found guarding tombs, graveyards, and other burial places, some engerras prefer to linger near the actual death sites of their charges and thus might be encountered on an ancient battlefield, in an abandoned keep, or anywhere a great hero has fallen. Depending on one's point of view, individual engerras might honor heroes whose lives weren't decidedly honorable, particularly if their charges repented for their villainous actions only moments before they died.

ENGERRA (FIREFLY AGATHION)

Born of those who sacrificed their lives for something greater than themselves, engerras resemble swarms of glowing fireflies and are sometimes mistaken for will-o'-wisp or simple tricks of the light. They are most often encountered in the tombs of legendary heroes but might linger anywhere such a hero has drawn their final breath.

Engerras believe that tales of worthy sacrifice hold great power. They gather the memories of those who died in service of a noble cause and then share those memories with mortals who might be inspired or cheered by them. An engerra's trademark glow is a sign of both sorrow and hope, for it simultaneously associates the death of a great hero with the determination to honor that hero's legacy.

ENGERRA

CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON TINY AGATHION CELESTIAL HOLY

Perception +20; darkvision

Languages Common, Diabolic, Epyrean; *truespeech*

Skills Arcana +16, Diplomacy +16, Performance +18, Religion +17, Society +20

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +6, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +5

Firefly's Remembrance Engerras embody the ethos of honoring the dead. When the engerra Recalls Knowledge about a creature whose final words it has heard spoken aloud, it uses the outcome one degree of success better than the result of its roll.

AC 27; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +18, **Will** +20; +1 status bonus to all saves vs. magic

HP 152; **Weaknesses** unholy 10

Speed 25 feet, fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ swarming bite +19 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 3d6+10 piercing

Divine Innate Spells DC 26, attack +18; **5th** *invoke spirits*; **3rd** *crisis of faith*, *holy light*; **1st** *enfeeble*, *infuse vitality*; **Cantrips** (4th) *light*, *stabilize*; **Constant** (5th) *truespeech*

Disperse ♦♦ (move) The engerra Strides or Flies. This movement doesn't trigger reactions. During the movement, the engerra can move through occupied spaces and tiny cracks, and it ignores difficult terrain and greater difficult terrain. It then coalesces back into its normal form.

Dying Breath ♦♦ (divine, emotion, fear, mental)

The engerra draws the air from around breathing creatures in a 40-foot emanation, giving them the feeling of drawing their last breath. Enemies in the area must attempt a DC 26 Will save. If at least one creature fails the save, the engerra can gift the stolen breath to a willing creature within 40 feet, granting that creature 2d6 temporary Hit Points that last for 1 minute.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature takes 2d6+7 mental damage and is frightened 1.

Critical Failure The creature takes 3d6+10 mental damage, is frightened 2, and becomes fatigued for 1 minute.

Final Words of Doom ♦♦ (auditory, divine, emotion, linguistic, mental) The engerra whispers words of doom to an enemy within 40 feet. The creature must attempt a DC 26 Will save.

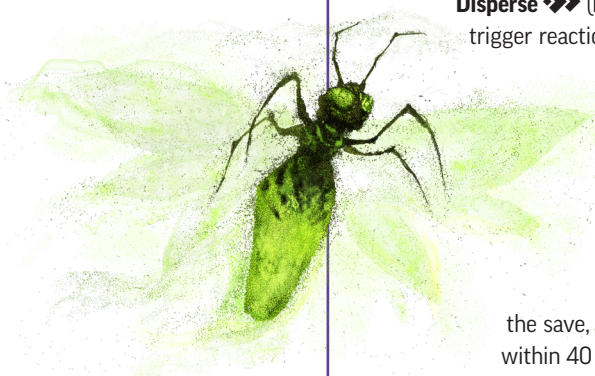
Critical Success As success, and the creature is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature takes 3d8+13 mental damage and is doomed 1 for 1 minute.

Critical Failure The creature takes 4d8+18 mental damage and is doomed 2 for 1 minute.

Final Words of Wisdom (auditory, divine, emotion, linguistic, mental) The engerra finds words to bolster a creature's spirits. The engerra spends 10 minutes speaking with a willing creature. If that creature has the fatigued condition, it's no longer fatigued. The creature can't benefit from any engerra's Final Words of Wisdom again for 1 year.



GARRHOLDION

Belief is a powerful force. When strong-willed individuals gather beneath a common banner, their unified conviction can take on a life of its own. The result is a garrholdion, a spirit construct that defends the meeting place of the faction that created it.

A garrholdion usually appears as a shimmering, idealized version of a typical faction member, though it might instead shift its appearance among that of specific individuals, never settling on just one. Whatever form it takes, a garrholdion is always marked by its faction's symbol. A Firebrands garrholdion, for example, bears that faction's crossed swords symbol, while a Pathfinder Society garrholdion is marked with the Glyph of the Open Road.

GARRHOLDION

CREATURE 20

RARE **HUGE** **CONSTRUCT** **INCORPOREAL** **MINDLESS**

Perception +33; darkvision, truesight

Skills Acrobatics +36, Athletics +38, Faction Lore +41

Str +10, **Dex** +6, **Con** +7, **Int** -5, **Wis** +5, **Cha** -2

Items +3 major striking longsword, supreme reinforcing steel shield (Hardness 12, HP 128, BT 64)

Faction-Bound A garrholdion is bound to a faction at its creation. It can't harm a known member of its faction, a symbol of its faction, or relics associated with its faction. It gains a +4 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to verify the identity of such creatures and objects. A garrholdion is also bound to a location associated with its faction, such as a fortress, an academy, or a secret hideout. It can't move more than 120 feet from its designated location. Finally, a garrholdion bears an obvious mark of its faction somewhere on its body. This mark can't be hidden.

AC 46 (48 with shield raised); **Fort** +36, **Ref** +27, **Will** +30

HP 350; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poisoned, precision, sickened, unconscious, vitality, void; **Resistances** physical 15 (except force, ghost touch, or spirit; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Belief Fortification (aura, emotion, occult) 30 feet. Members of the garrholdion's faction gain a +1 status bonus to saving throws against emotion effects while within the aura.

Quick Shield Block The garrholdion gains an additional reaction each round that can be used only for Shield Block.

Reactive Defense **Trigger** A creature within reach attacks the garrholdion's ally; **Effect** The garrholdion positions its shield in front of the attack, granting its ally a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack. It then makes a melee Strike against the triggering creature.

Reactive Strike **Pathfinder Monster Core** 359

Shield Block **Pathfinder Monster Core** 360

Speed 25 feet, fly 25 feet

Melee **longsword** +38 (magical, versatile P), **Damage** 4d8+18 slashing

Ranged **belief ray** +34 (magical, range 60 feet, spirit), **Damage** 8d6 spirit plus seed of doubt

Innate Occult Spells DC 39; **Constant (10th)** truesight

Rituals DC 39; **7th** consecrate

Seed of Doubt (mental, occult) A creature hit by the garrholdion's belief ray Strike doubts their actions, forcing them to hesitate. The target must succeed at a DC 39 Will save or be stunned 1 (or stunned 3 on a critical failure). On a critical success, the target becomes temporarily immune to seed of doubt for 24 hours.



FACTION-BOUND

While typically bound to an established faction, any group of individuals can manifest a garrholdion, provided all members share the same purpose. A faction's destruction typically has no effect on its garrholdion. Members of a faction that has changed its purpose might even find themselves facing a garrholdion of their past beliefs.

If a faction is known for wielding a particular type of weapon, such as a Red Mantis sawtooth saber or the Aldori Academy's dueling swords, their garrholdion typically appears armed with the appropriate weapon.



CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

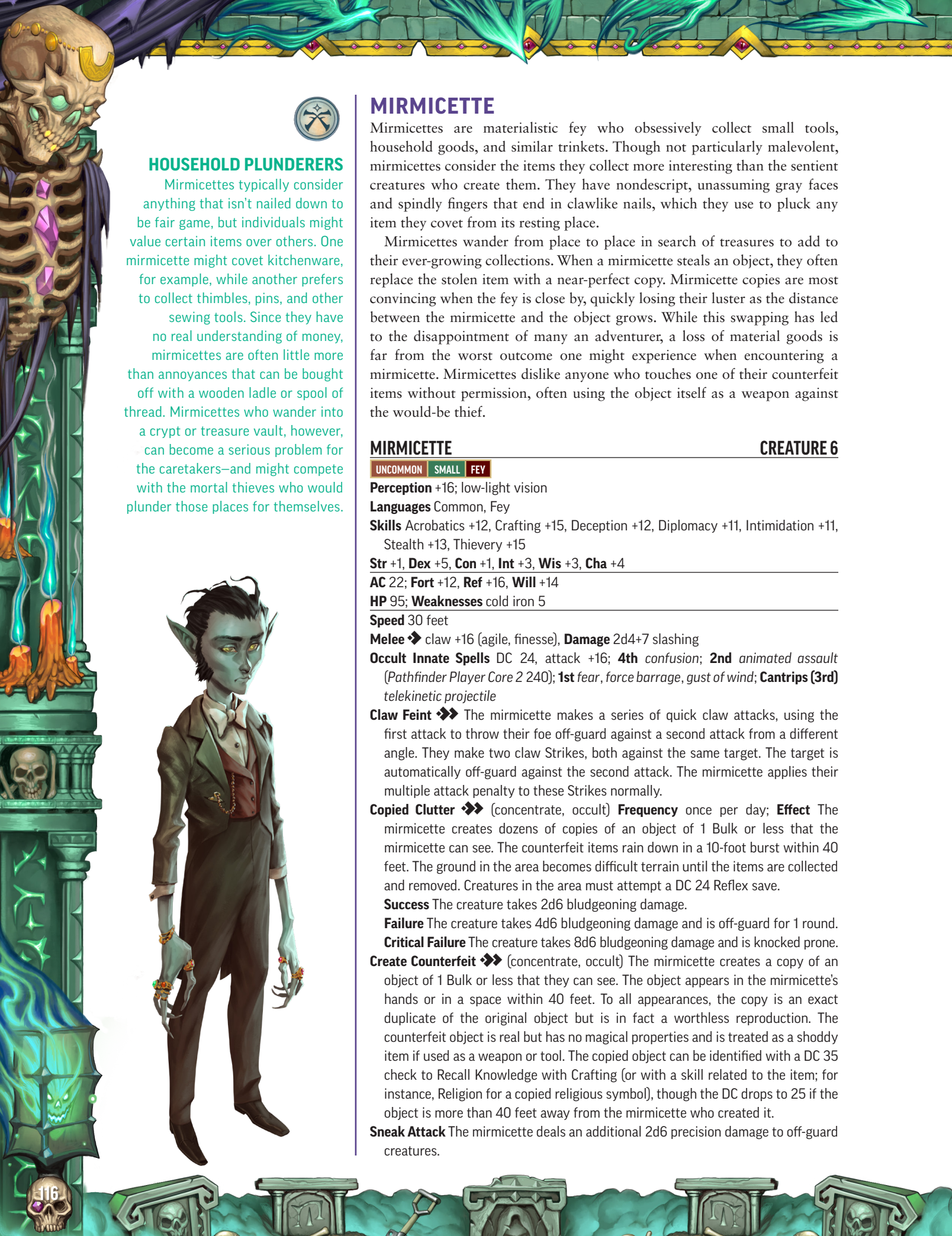
GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



HOUSEHOLD PLUNDERERS

Mirmicettes typically consider anything that isn't nailed down to be fair game, but individuals might value certain items over others. One mirmicette might covet kitchenware, for example, while another prefers to collect thimbles, pins, and other sewing tools. Since they have no real understanding of money, mirmicettes are often little more than annoyances that can be bought off with a wooden ladle or spool of thread. Mirmicettes who wander into a crypt or treasure vault, however, can become a serious problem for the caretakers—and might compete with the mortal thieves who would plunder those places for themselves.



MIRMICETTE

Mirmicettes are materialistic fey who obsessively collect small tools, household goods, and similar trinkets. Though not particularly malevolent, mirmicettes consider the items they collect more interesting than the sentient creatures who create them. They have nondescript, unassuming gray faces and spindly fingers that end in clawlike nails, which they use to pluck any item they covet from its resting place.

Mirmicettes wander from place to place in search of treasures to add to their ever-growing collections. When a mirmicette steals an object, they often replace the stolen item with a near-perfect copy. Mirmicette copies are most convincing when the fey is close by, quickly losing their luster as the distance between the mirmicette and the object grows. While this swapping has led to the disappointment of many an adventurer, a loss of material goods is far from the worst outcome one might experience when encountering a mirmicette. Mirmicettes dislike anyone who touches one of their counterfeit items without permission, often using the object itself as a weapon against the would-be thief.

MIRMICETTE

CREATURE 6

UNCOMMON SMALL FEY

Perception +16; low-light vision

Languages Common, Fey

Skills Acrobatics +12, Crafting +15, Deception +12, Diplomacy +11, Intimidation +11, Stealth +13, Thievery +15

Str +1, **Dex** +5, **Con** +1, **Int** +3, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

AC 22; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +16, **Will** +14

HP 95; **Weaknesses** cold iron 5

Speed 30 feet

Melee ✦ claw +16 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d4+7 slashing

Occult Innate Spells DC 24, attack +16; **4th** *confusion*; **2nd** *animated assault* (Pathfinder Player Core 2 240); **1st** *fear*, *force barrage*, *gust of wind*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *telekinetic projectile*

Claw Feint ✦✦ The mirmicette makes a series of quick claw attacks, using the first attack to throw their foe off-guard against a second attack from a different angle. They make two claw Strikes, both against the same target. The target is automatically off-guard against the second attack. The mirmicette applies their multiple attack penalty to these Strikes normally.

Copied Clutter ✦✦ (concentrate, occult) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The mirmicette creates dozens of copies of an object of 1 Bulk or less that the mirmicette can see. The counterfeit items rain down in a 10-foot burst within 40 feet. The ground in the area becomes difficult terrain until the items are collected and removed. Creatures in the area must attempt a DC 24 Reflex save.

Success The creature takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage.

Failure The creature takes 4d6 bludgeoning damage and is off-guard for 1 round.

Critical Failure The creature takes 8d6 bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone.

Create Counterfeit ✦✦ (concentrate, occult) The mirmicette creates a copy of an object of 1 Bulk or less that they can see. The object appears in the mirmicette's hands or in a space within 40 feet. To all appearances, the copy is an exact duplicate of the original object but is in fact a worthless reproduction. The counterfeit object is real but has no magical properties and is treated as a shoddy item if used as a weapon or tool. The copied object can be identified with a DC 35 check to Recall Knowledge with Crafting (or with a skill related to the item; for instance, Religion for a copied religious symbol), though the DC drops to 25 if the object is more than 40 feet away from the mirmicette who created it.

Sneak Attack The mirmicette deals an additional 2d6 precision damage to off-guard creatures.

MOLDERING STEED

A moldering steed is a horse whose unshakable will couldn't be broken, even by death. Draped in rotting flesh and trailing its own stinking entrails, the steed fights unrelentingly against its undead state, seeking out the spirits of strong-willed creatures to consume in a vain attempt to repair its fractured soul. Once it catches a scent, the steed pursues its prey until it consumes the creature's spirit or finds stronger-willed prey to track.

The few moldering steeds that arise naturally often died attempting to escape desperate situations, such as floods or fires. More often, necromancers create moldering steeds to serve as mounts for their undead armies. Unlike living mounts, moldering steeds don't need to be fed or cared for, and they'll often accept an undead rider who allows them to hunt down living prey. Due to the steed's insatiable hunger, however, living necromancers must take care not to become their steed's next meal.

MOLDERING STEED

CREATURE 16

UNCOMMON LARGE MINDLESS UNDEAD UNHOLY

Perception +28; darkvision, willsense (precise) 120 feet

Skills Athletics +32, Survival +30

Str +9, **Dex** +7, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** +5, **Cha** -2

Willense (divine, mental) The moldering steed senses all living creatures within the listed range that have a Wisdom of +1 or higher.

AC 38; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +25, **Will** +28

HP 370, void healing (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360); **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** slashing 15, vitality 15

Buck ⤴ DC 38 (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 358)

Frightful Presence (aura, divine, emotion, fear, mental) 60 feet, DC 38 (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 359)

Speed 40 feet

Melee ⤴ hoof +31, **Damage** 3d10+13 bludgeoning

Melee ⤴ jaws +31, **Damage** 3d8+13 piercing plus siphon will

Gallop ⤴⤴ The moldering steed Strides twice. It has a +10-foot circumstance bonus to its Speed during these Strides.

Hunt Will ⤴ (concentrate) The moldering steed designates the living creature with the highest Will modifier within 120 feet as its prey. The steed gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to Seek the prey and to Survival checks to Track the prey. The first time the steed hits its designated prey in a round, it deals an additional 1d8 precision damage. These effects last until the steed uses Hunt Will again.

Siphon Will (divine) When the moldering steed damages a living creature with its jaws Strike, the steed gains 20 temporary Hit Points that last for 1 minute, and the creature must succeed at a DC 38 Will save or become stupefied 1. Further damage dealt by the steed increases the creature's stupefied value on a failed save by 1, to a maximum of stupefied 4.

Undead Steed Undead and creatures allied with them can Command a moldering steed without needing to attempt a skill check.



ASCETIVORES

Skilled necromancers have created a variant of the moldering steed to reduce the creature's risk to living handlers. Instead of consuming the will of the living, ascetivores feed on the connection holy beings share with their deities. Rather than impacting all living creatures, the moldering steed's Hunt Will, siphon will, and willsense abilities affect only living creatures with the holy trait.



CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



A CAVALRY WITHOUT MOUNTS

Outfitting a raised cavalry with sufficient mounts typically involves the slaughter of horses on a massive scale. The destruction of a horse ranch, sudden disappearance of a wild herd, or an increase in travelers robbed of their mounts might signal a necromantic plot afoot. Without horses or other undead mounts to ride, a raised cavalry is slowed 1.

RAISED CAVALRY

Undead are plentiful throughout the Gravelands, but even so, necromancers must sometimes get creative to organize the varied undead they have on hand into a cohesive military unit. While the typical raised cavalry is a mix of skeletons, zombies, and ghouls, many units also incorporate mummies, ghosts, and more powerful undead.

The Knights of Lastwall have reported battalions of undead rising from the fields where they were buried, presumably in preparation for a future assault. One of the most infamous of these staging grounds was Fallowdeep, the network of subterranean tunnels beneath the former dwarven fortress of Hammer Rock. When the Whispering Tyrant attacked the nations of the Inner Sea, Fallowdeep's supply of undead was vastly depleted, but caches of corpses no doubt remain there for a resourceful necromancer to exploit.

RAISED CAVALRY

CREATURE 19

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN MINDLESS TROOP UNDEAD UNHOLY

Perception +32; darkvision

Languages Common, Necril

Skills Athletics +37

Str +10, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +5, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +6

Mounted When not mounted, the raised cavalry is slowed 1.

AC 42; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +28, **Will** +31

HP 360 (4 segments), void healing (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360); **Thresholds** 240 (3 segments), 140 (2 segments); **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** area damage 20, splash damage 20, vitality 20;

Resistances physical 20

Shuffle Forces The raised cavalry consists of skeletons, zombies, and other undead hastily bound to a shared cause. The cavalry has resistance 20 to physical damage, as it shuffles its weakest members to the front lines. When the cavalry is reduced to 12 squares or fewer, its resistance to physical drops to 10. Once the cavalry reaches the 2-segment threshold, it loses its resistance to physical damage.

Troop Defenses (*Pathfinder NPC Core* 231)

Speed 40 feet; troop movement

Claws and Jaws ◆ to ◆◆◆ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Members of the cavalry leap from their mounts and attack each enemy within 10 feet (DC 41 basic Reflex save). The damage depends on the number of actions.

◆ 2d12+14 piercing and slashing plus 1d12 void

◆◆ 3d12+14 piercing and slashing plus 1d12 void

◆◆◆ 4d12+14 piercing and slashing plus 1d12 void

Hail of Arrows ◆◆ Members of the raised cavalry draw or reload their shortbows, then launch a ranged attack in the form of a volley. This volley is a 10-foot burst within 60 feet that deals 7d8 piercing damage (DC 41 basic Reflex save). When the cavalry is reduced to 2 segments, this area decreases to a 5-foot burst.

Trampling Charge ◆◆◆ The raised cavalry Strides twice with a +10-foot circumstance bonus to its Speed. During this movement, the cavalry can move through the spaces of Medium or smaller creatures. It deals 3d12+14 bludgeoning damage to each creature whose space it moves through (DC 41 basic Reflex save). A creature that fails its save is also knocked prone. The cavalry can affect the same creature only once in a single use of Trampling Charge.

Troop Movement (*Pathfinder NPC Core* 231)

SPLINTER OFFICER

An army of mindless undead possesses a fatal flaw: it requires near-constant babysitting from its maker. Yet, any undead with enough sentence to command such an army runs the risk of turning on its creator. Skilled necromancers have endeavored to strike a balance between these two extremes with the creation of splinter officers. Capable of leading small battalions of undead, splinter officers are at the same time uniquely bound to their creator—and easily disposed of should they ever decide to go rogue.

The first splinter officer was created when a lich separated his *soul cage* into multiple parts and implanted each shard into a unique undead champion, over which the lich enjoyed complete control. Ultimately, the lich decided the risk to his *soul cage* wasn't worth the benefits, but the technique of soul-splitting proved too useful to abandon. Today, splinter officers are created by plucking an intelligent creature's soul from Pharasma's clutches at the moment of the creature's death. The fresh soul is then shattered, with the splinter officer receiving the largest portion and the remaining splinters being implanted into the mindless undead soldiers the officer controls.

SPLINTER OFFICER

CREATURE 19

UNCOMMON MEDIUM UNDEAD UNHOLY

Perception +35; darkvision 120 feet, splintersense

Languages Common, Necril

Skills Acrobatics +30, Deception +37, Diplomacy +37, Warfare Lore +39

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +5, **Int** +5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +10

Items +2 greater resilient chain shirt, +2 greater striking longbow, +2 greater striking keen rapier

Splintersense (divine, mental) The splinter officer knows the direction and distance of all undead that share splinters of the same splinter officer's soul. These undead are always considered to be allies of the splinter officer.

AC 42; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +35, **Will** +36

HP 375, void healing (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360); **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, nonlethal, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious; **Weaknesses** vitality 15;

Resistances cold 20, electricity 20, fire 20, piercing 20, slashing 20

Behind the Lines ☞ **Trigger** The splinter officer is targeted by an attack;

Requirements At least one of the officer's undead allies is adjacent to the officer; **Effect** The ally interposes itself, granting the officer a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ *rapier* +34 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse, magical), **Damage** 4d6+15 piercing

Ranged ♦ *longbow* +34 (deadly d10, magical, propulsive, range increment 100 feet, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 4d8+15 piercing

Raise Defenses ♦♦ (concentrate, divine) The splinter officer mentally commands its undead allies to strengthen their defenses. For 1 round, each undead that shares the officer's splintered soul gains a +1 circumstance bonus to AC.

Rally the Rabble ♦♦♦ (concentrate, divine) The splinter officer mentally energizes the undead under its command. Each undead that shares the officer's splintered soul is quickened for 1 round. Quickened allies can use the extra action only to Stride or Strike. The officer can't Rally the Rabble again for 1d4 rounds.

Synchronized Step ♦♦ (concentrate, divine) The splinter officer mentally commands the undead that share its splintered soul to reposition. The officer Steps, and each undead that shares the officer's splintered soul can use a reaction to Step.



THE SPLINTERED SOUL

How finely a soul can be divided remains uncertain, but thus far none have been split into more than 50 pieces, including the shard used to raise the splinter officer. Depending on the desires of its creator, the splinter officer might be given the unused pieces of its soul to raise additional undead while in the field. However, a necromancer paranoid enough to rely on a splinter officer to command their undead legion rarely sacrifices such power willingly.



CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX



ROYAL GARDENERS

Stelemoras sometimes serve hamadryads and other noble fey as gardeners, decorating their courtyards with fantastic sculptures formed from flowering vines.

Kindly rulers typically demand that stelemoras in their employ limit their creations to inanimate subjects, but crueler fey place no such restrictions on their gardeners' creativity.

STELEMORA

Stelemoras are nature-loving fey dedicated to beautifying the natural world by ensnaring unsuspecting creatures and transforming their bodies into elaborate topiaries from the inside out. Aside from their bulbous, spiked seed pods, stelemoras are composed entirely of vines, which they can grow, retract, and shed at will. Stelemoras regrow damaged vines at an alarming rate, allowing them to recover from nearly any injury over time.

Young stelemoras travel the world looking for a piece of wilderness to call their own. Once they select a proper spot, they use their vines to snare passing creatures, holding their target still as they forcibly implant their seeds inside the victim. The implanted seeds then take root, using the creature itself as fertilizer and slowly transforming its body into a mass of vines and leaves. Once they complete their work, the stelemora sheds their vines and regrows in a new location to begin their next masterpiece.

While stelemoras prefer to fill their gardens with once-living creatures, they entomb inanimate objects in vines if they can't capture their preferred subjects. Stelemoras have also been known to transform statues, treasure chests, and even entire buildings into topiaries in order to lure in their favored prey.

CREATURE 7

STELEMORA

UNCOMMON LARGE FEY PLANT

Perception +17; low-light vision

Languages Common, Fey

Skills Athletics +17, Nature +17, Stealth +15 (+18 in forests), Survival +16

Str +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +3

AC 24; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +14, **Will** +17

HP 188, regeneration 20 (deactivated by fire, *Pathfinder Monster Core* 360);

Weaknesses cold iron 10, fire 10

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ vine +17 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+8 bludgeoning plus Grab (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 359)

Melee ♦ seed pod +17, **Damage** 2d10+8 piercing

Constrict ♦ 1d8+8 bludgeoning, DC 25 (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 358)

Flurry of Vines ♦♦ The stelemora makes two vine Strikes at a -2 penalty, each against a different target. These attacks count toward the stelemora's multiple attack penalty, but the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after they make all their attacks.

Slithering Vine ♦ The stelemora increases the reach of their vine Strike by 10 feet until the end of their turn.

Sow and Sprout ♦♦ The stelemora implants a seed inside a creature they're grappling. The target must attempt a DC 25 Fortitude save.

Success The stelemora fails to implant a seed, and the target is unaffected.

Failure The target is sickened 1. While sickened, the target also takes 4d6 persistent piercing damage as flowering vines sprout through its flesh. The target can't end the persistent damage until it recovers from the sickened condition.

Critical Failure As failure, except the target is sickened 2.

Tangle of Vines ♦ (concentrate) Until the next time they act, the stelemora appears to be a normal tangle of flowering vines. They have an automatic result of 35 (38 in forests) on Deception checks and DCs to pass as a non-creature plant.

TALLUSIAN

While many celestials are drawn to what is, tallusians care about what was. Compelled to protect the remnants of fallen civilizations, tallusians often work alongside dryads and other creatures of nature, helping restore the land around their ruins while fighting off evil influences seeking to claim the abandoned structures for themselves. Though few know more about the ancient civilizations they protect than the tallusians themselves, they rarely make distinctions between holy sites and those used for nefarious purposes. To a tallusian, any building, regardless of its history, can be repurposed into something new.

Physically, tallusians resemble oversized red pandas, except they have six legs, piercing blue eyes, and quills of sharpened stone growing along their backs and from their bushy tails. At rest, tallusians appear virtually indistinguishable from the buildings they protect, masquerading as heaps of rubble until they move. They also possess the ability to adopt a humanoid form, often that of an energetic child. Tallusians disguised as children have been known to lead adventurers to civilizations that have otherwise fallen off the map, in hopes the heroes will help protect the ruins until they can be restored.

TALLUSIAN

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON MEDIUM AZATA CELESTIAL HOLY

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages Empyrean, Fey; *truespeech*

Skills Acrobatics +11, Architecture Lore +14, Athletics +11, Crafting +13, Nature +13, Stealth +11 (+14 in ruins), Survival +13

Str +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

AC 21; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +12

HP 76; **Weaknesses** cold iron 5, unholy 5

Speed 25 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ✎ jaws +14, **Damage** 2d8+8 piercing

Melee ✎ claw +14 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+6 slashing

Melee ✎ tail +14, **Damage** 2d6+6 bludgeoning plus Knockdown

Ranged ✎ quill +14 (agile, range increment 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+6 piercing

Divine Innate Spells DC 22; **4th** *shape stone*; **2nd** *humanoid form* (at will);

1st *pummeling rubble*; **Constant (5th)** *truespeech*

Crumbling Ground ✎✎ (divine, earth) The tallusian slaps their tail against the earth, creating a vibration at the precise frequency needed to shake the ground in a 10-foot burst within 30 feet. The area becomes difficult terrain for 24 hours. Any creature in the area must attempt a DC 22 Reflex save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is off-guard until the start of its next turn.

Failure The creature falls prone.

Critical Failure As failure, plus the creature takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

Rubble ✎ (concentrate) Until the next time it acts, the tallusian appears to be a normal pile of broken rubble. It has an automatic result of 31 (34 in ruins) on Deception checks and DCs to pass as a pile of rubble.

Tail Spin ✎✎ The tallusian spins in place, sweeping their tail to knock down their foes. Each adjacent foe takes 2d6+6 bludgeoning damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save). Also on a failed save, the target is knocked prone. Afterward, the tallusian becomes clumsy 1 for 1 round.



EXCESSIVE EXUBERANCE

With their ability to shapeshift and seemingly limitless energy, tallusians are often mistaken as fey by the adventurers who encounter them. Indeed, many tallusians feel more comfortable among creatures of the First World than those of the celestial realms. Angels and even other azatas sometimes feel the intensity with which tallusians protect their ruins to be excessive. At heart, however, tallusians are as kindhearted as they are exuberant, flying into a frenzy of tooth, claw, and quill only when they feel their territory is at risk.

CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION

GRAVELANDS SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX





ARSIELLA DEI

Chernasardo Warden and Commander of Fort Ozem

Arsiella Dei was born to be a Chernasardo Ranger. The youngest daughter of trapper-turned-military-leader Irgal Nirmath, who was assassinated in 4655 AR after the disorganized groups of rangers he brought together under a common banner gained their independence from Molthune, Arsiella grew up hearing stories of her father's exploits in a nation named in his honor.

Had she been raised in a different time or place, Arsiella might have been an artist, but instead she began her training under the members of her father's former army, Irgal's Axe, from the time she could walk. Except for the occasional portrait sketched in the margins of her notebook, throughout her childhood Arsiella remained singularly focused on continuing her father's work of keeping Nirmathas a free nation. From her tutors, she learned not only how to wield an axe and bow, but also the arts of stealth, subterfuge, and sabotage. Arsiella was by all accounts considered an excellent student, no less cunning, clever, or insightful than Irgal Nirmath himself.

While her father's compatriots taught Arsiella from an early age, they also spoiled her, often going easier on her than they would another sparring partner. As a result, by the time she was an adolescent, Arsiella believed she was nearly invincible. She took outsized risks on her patrols, sometimes endangering not only her own life, but those of her companions. In this way, Arsiella differed from her father, who always tempered his willingness to risk his own life with a concern for the safety of those under his command. Arsiella knew that if she wanted to become a leader of her people, she would need wisdom as well as skill, but it wasn't until she nearly died at the hands of a Molthuni advance line that she realized the importance of leaving her familiar surroundings of the Southern Fangwood to gain experience abroad.

Arsiella relocated to Lastwall, where she sought tutelage under the Knights of Ozem, a military order dedicated to the goddess Iomedae. In Vigil, the capital of Lastwall at that time, she became a devout follower of the Inheritor, admiring both the goddess's strength and her sense of justice. During this period, Arsiella took the last name Dei, an appellation meant not only to honor her new goddess but to minimize the special treatment she might receive as the daughter of a famous war hero such as Irgal Nirmath.

In Lastwall, Arsiella also built upon her long-standing belief in the importance of mastering different combat styles. Her teachers among the Knights of Ozem taught

her how to fight undead, of course, but they also helped her develop the discipline and military regimen she so sorely lacked throughout her youth. In return, Arsiella became a teacher in her own right, instructing younger, inexperienced knights (many of whom would themselves go on to become Crimson Reclaimers) in the value of stealth, survival, and guerrilla warfare. To this day, Arsiella fights using techniques borrowed from the Chernasardo Rangers and the Knights of Ozem, a combination that makes her unique among the members of both those organizations.

Arsiella wasn't in Vigil when it was destroyed in 4719 AR, but she was among the first of the forces to return to the city to take a reckoning of the damage that had occurred. Only when it became clear that Tar-Baphon had escaped his prison and that his undead forces were in the process of overwhelming Lastwall did she retreat, along with the Knights of Ozem, to the port city of Vellumis. As Lastwall died and the Gravelands rose to take its place, Arsiella was vital to the reestablishment of the Knights of Ozem, though she refused to become a Knight of Lastwall herself. In this way, Arsiella's years of training came to a fruition—though it pained her to leave her comrades-in-arms behind, she believed her talents would be put to better use mustering foreign forces for the greater battle against the Whispering Tyrant that was surely to come.

By the time she returned to the Southern Fangwood, Arsiella had become both a battle-hardened warrior and a formidable strategist, and she quickly rose through the ranks to become one of the few Chernasardo wardens. While the rangers continued to be a loose confederation of freedom fighters, Arsiella possessed an uncanny ability to coordinate operations using a combination of charm, intimidation, and meticulous organization. This ability, along with her time serving with the Knights of Ozem and her devotion to Iomedae, earned Arsiella her role as the commander of Fort Ozem. When the time came to find a resting place for the *Chalice of Ozem*, Fort Ozem was the obvious choice, and Arsiella gladly assumed the role of the artifact's chief protector. Arsiella isn't one to be overly impressed by titles, but she sees her appointment as a way to continue her father's legacy, and she has used a bit of her pull to afford him a place of honor within the catacombs beneath the fort. She considers her regular visits to Irgal's tomb as both an honor to her father and a source of strength that helps her fulfill her current duties.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Arsiella Dei oversees Fort Ozem as the PCs infiltrate the outpost in search of the *Chalice of Ozem*. Of all the fort's defenders, only Arsiella is aware of the *Chalice's* presence in the catacombs. Arsiella takes the secrecy of the artifact's presence in the fort with the utmost seriousness. She's long believed that her father's assassination was made possible only because someone inadvertently revealed his location, and she has vowed not to let her knowledge of the fort's true purpose fall into evil hands.

In her time as fort commander, Arsiella has increased the use of traps in the forward "sword" section of Fort Ozem. She's also made deals with local fey and other creatures to add an additional level of security throughout the fort, trusting these creatures to repel intruders should the fort's humanoid defenders fail or prove untrustworthy. She views herself as the *Chalice of Ozem's* last line of defense, however. If presented with unbeatable odds, Arsiella abandons the fort with the *Chalice*. Before then, anyone who enters Fort Ozem without her permission is likely to face a hail of arrows from her bow or the sharp side of her axe.

COMMANDER ARSIELLA DEI

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE MEDIUM AIUVARIN ELF HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +21; low-light vision

Languages Common, Elven

Skills Acrobatics +18, Athletics +16, Diplomacy +16, Intimidation +16, Iomedae Lore +18, Nature +18, Religion +16, Stealth +18, Survival +20

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +4, **Int** +4, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +4

Blind-Fight Arsiella doesn't need to succeed at a flat check to target concealed creatures. She isn't off-guard to creatures that are hidden from her (unless she's off-guard to them for reasons other than the hidden condition) and only needs a successful DC 5 flat check to target a hidden creature.

Items breastplate, composite shortbow (20 arrows), *Irgal's Axe* (+1 striking vitalizing battle axe), +1 leather armor, religious symbol of Iomedae

AC 28; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +19, **Will** +21

HP 155

Reactive Strike ⤴ (Pathfinder Monster Core 359)

Speed 30 feet

Melee ⬥ battle axe +22 (magical, sweep), **Damage** 2d8+11 slashing

Ranged ⬥ composite shortbow +21 (deadly d10, propulsive, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 1d6+10 piercing

Ranger Warden Spells 2 Focus Points, DC 28; **5th** gravity weapon (Pathfinder Player Core 383), soothing mist (Pathfinder Player Core 383)

For Nirmathas! ⬥ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Arsiella makes two battle axe Strikes against the same target. Both Strikes use Arsiella's current multiple attack penalty, but each Strike takes a -2 penalty. A target hit by both attacks on the same turn must also succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude saving throw or be knocked prone.

Heavenly Strike ⬥⬥ (divine) Arsiella calls on the spirit of her father and the strength of Iomedae to infuse her weapon, then Strikes with that weapon. If the Strike hits, Arsiella deals an extra weapon die of vitality damage.

Hunt Prey ⬥ (concentrate) Arsiella designates a single creature she can see and hear, or one she's Tracking, as her prey. She gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to Seek her prey and to Survival checks to Track her prey. The first time she hits her designated prey in a round, she deals an additional 1d8 precision damage. She also ignores the penalty for making ranged attacks within the second range increment when attacking her prey. These effects last until she uses Hunt Prey again.

Quick Draw ⬥ Arsiella draws a weapon, then Strikes with that weapon.

Skirmish Strike ⬥ Arsiella either Steps and then Strikes, or Strikes and then Steps.



CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

INTRODUCTION
GRAVELANDS
SURVIVORS

ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND
FAITH

VELLUMIS
GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE
TOOLBOX



SELDEG BHEDLIS

Embittered Graveknight Sworn to Arazni



The tale of Seldeg Bhedlis is one of bitterness and failure. Once a proud Knight of Ozem, Seldeg fought alongside Arazni, then still the herald of Aroden, during the Shining Crusade. He rose quickly through the ranks, and in 3889 AR, he was one of six knights handpicked to infiltrate the city of Mechitar to take down the nation of Geb from within.

This appointment proved to be Seldeg's undoing. Until this point, Seldeg's life had been one of strict military regimen. Once freed from the shackles of morality imposed upon him by his upbringing, Seldeg found the pleasures of Geb too tempting to resist. He eventually fell into the arms of a vampire lover, who was herself a secret thrall to one of that nation's Blood Lords. Over the following weeks, Seldeg revealed to his new lover everything he knew about the Knights of Ozem, dealing irreparable damage to his former order. Recognizing that his actions would be viewed harshly by both Aroden and Pharsasma, Seldeg assented to becoming a graveknight rather than face the judgment of the gods.

Seldeg's first task as a graveknight was to steal Arazni's body from Vigil, where it had been laid to rest after her defeat at the hands of the Whispering Tyrant. In this, at least, Seldeg succeeded. Upon the graveknight's return, Geb transformed Arazni into a lich and assigned Seldeg and his fellow fallen knights, now known as the Council Libertine, to serve as both her personal bodyguards and captors.

Seldeg provided centuries of faithful service to the Ghost King, but eventually the graveknight failed again. In 4719 AR, spurred by a premonition of Tar-Baphon's return, Arazni escaped the Council Libertine, fled the nation of Geb, and returned to Lastwall. Weeks later, she was killed fighting the Whispering Tyrant alongside a group of mortal heroes and, as a consequence, was granted godhood. As punishment for allowing Arazni to escape, Geb appointed Seldeg with the unenviable task of covering up this failure. Despite the graveknight's best efforts, however, hiding Arazni's ascension proved impossible. When Seldeg learned that Geb planned to destroy his graveknight armor, the embittered graveknight fled to the Gravelands and pledged his service to a new master, Tar-Baphon.

Still haunted by his failures, Seldeg has since become fixated on Arazni, whose history he believes mirrors his own. Like Arazni, Seldeg became undead largely against his will, then was forced to commit atrocities he would've otherwise abhorred had fate not set him

down a grim path. The fallen knight now intends to repair Arazni's fate, along with his own, once and for all. To do so, he's devised a ritual that will swap Arazni's story with that of another goddess, Iomedae. If successful, Seldeg believes he'll rewrite history such that Iomedae, and not Arazni, will have died at the hands of Tar-Baphon.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Seldeg Bhedlis previously appeared in the Blood Lords Adventure Path, where the Ghost King Geb proposed killing the graveknight and destroying his cursed armor. Despite these machinations, Seldeg managed to survive, though his iconic armor was damaged during his escape. Geb's betrayal, along with Seldeg's growing discontent with his role as the Ghost King's spymaster, inspired the graveknight to defect from Geb and travel to the Gravelands to pledge his service to the Whispering Tyrant.

While the characters might not realize it, Seldeg Bhedlis drives the story of all three adventures presented in *Claws of the Tyrant*. In each adventure, Seldeg's actions arise from his desperate (and arguably delusional) belief that by undoing Arazni's fate, he'll somehow change his own. Seldeg's bitterness, however, blinds him to the fact that his attempts to rewrite history lead him even further away from the redemption he so desperately seeks.

In "Gravelands Survivors," Seldeg sends one of his agents to the ruined village of Yua's Hope to retrieve one of the *Bloodstones of Arazni*, an artifact Seldeg believes is vital to powering his ritual. The heroes are among a group of refugees who must deliver the *Bloodstone* into safe hands.

In "Ashes for Ozem," Seldeg tasks the characters with stealing another relic, the *Chalice of Ozem*, from Fort Ozem, a former Knights of Ozem stronghold now under the stewardship of the Chernasardo Rangers. Though the *Chalice* isn't required to enact his ritual, Seldeg believes an artifact so tied to the histories of Arazni and Iomedae will lend power to his magic.

The book's final adventure, "Of Blood and Faith," sees Seldeg undertaking the ritual to swap the fates of Arazni and Iomedae. In this adventure, the heroes race Seldeg's minions to recover the two still-missing *Bloodstones*. At the adventure's climax, the characters finally have the chance to confront Seldeg face-to-face and put an end to the graveknight's machinations once and for all.

SELDEG BHEDLIS

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE MEDIUM GRAVEKNIGHT UNDEAD UNHOLY

Perception +32; darkvision

Languages Chthonian, Common, Diabolic, Kelish, Necril, Osiriani

Skills Arazni Lore +38, Athletics +38, Diplomacy +34, Intimidation +34, Religion +32, Society +34, Warfare Lore +34
Str +10, **Dex** +6, **Con** +10, **Int** +7, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +7

Items +2 resilient standard-grade adamantine full plate, javelin (4), longsword, supreme sturdy shield (Hardness 20, HP 160, BT 80)

AC 46 (48 with shield raised); **Fort** +36, **Ref** +32, **Will** +33

HP 465, rejuvenation, void healing (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360); **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, fire, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Sacrilegious Aura (aura, divine, void) 30 feet. Counteract modifier +31 (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 178)

Iron Command  **Trigger** An enemy within 15 feet damages Seldeg; **Effect** Seldeg puts an impertinent foe who dared harm him in their proper place. He commands the enemy to kneel in obedience. If they refuse, they must pay the price in pain and anguish. The triggering creature must choose one of the following options: the enemy kneels, dropping prone as a free action, or the enemy refuses and takes 6d6 mental damage. In addition, Seldeg's Strikes against the triggering creature deal an additional 3 damage until the end of his next turn. Seldeg chooses whether the additional damage is spirit or void each time he uses this reaction.

Reactive Strike  (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 359)

Shield Block  (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 360)

Speed 25 feet

Melee  flaming longsword +38 (fire, magical, versatile P), **Damage** 6d8+18 slashing plus 2d10 fire

Melee  fist +39 (agile, finesse, fire, magical), **Damage** 5d8+18 bludgeoning plus 2d10 fire

Ranged  flaming javelin +34 (fire, magical, thrown 30 feet), **Damage** 6d6+18 piercing plus 2d10 fire

Champion Devotion Spells 1 Focus Point, DC 39; **10th touch of the void** (*Pathfinder Player Core* 2 256)

Devastating Blast   (arcane, fire) 11d12 fire, DC 39 (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 178)

Graveknight's Curse This curse affects anyone who wears Seldeg's armor for at least 1 hour. **Saving Throw** DC 39 Will save; **Onset** 1 hour; **Stage 1** doomed 1, and the wearer can't remove the armor (1 day); **Stage 2** doomed 2, -10-foot status penalty to Speeds, and the wearer can't remove the armor (1 day); **Stage 3** the wearer dies and transforms into Seldeg.

Phantom Mount    (arcane) Seldeg summons a supernatural mount as per *marvelous mount* (10th rank). Unlike *marvelous mount*, the mount's AC and saving throw bonuses are all 4 levels lower than Seldeg's, and the mount has one-third of Seldeg's Hit Points (rounded down). If the mount is destroyed, Seldeg must wait 1 hour before using this ability again.

HP 155; **AC** 42; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +28, **Will** +29

Ruinous Weapons Any weapon or unarmed attack Seldeg uses gains the effects of the +1 *greater striking* and *greater flaming runes*.

Swap Fates  (divine, teleportation) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Seldeg switches the fates of two creatures within 500 feet. The two creatures teleport into each other's spaces. Each creature then attempts a DC 39 Will save.

Critical Success The target becomes temporarily immune to Swap Fates for 24 hours.

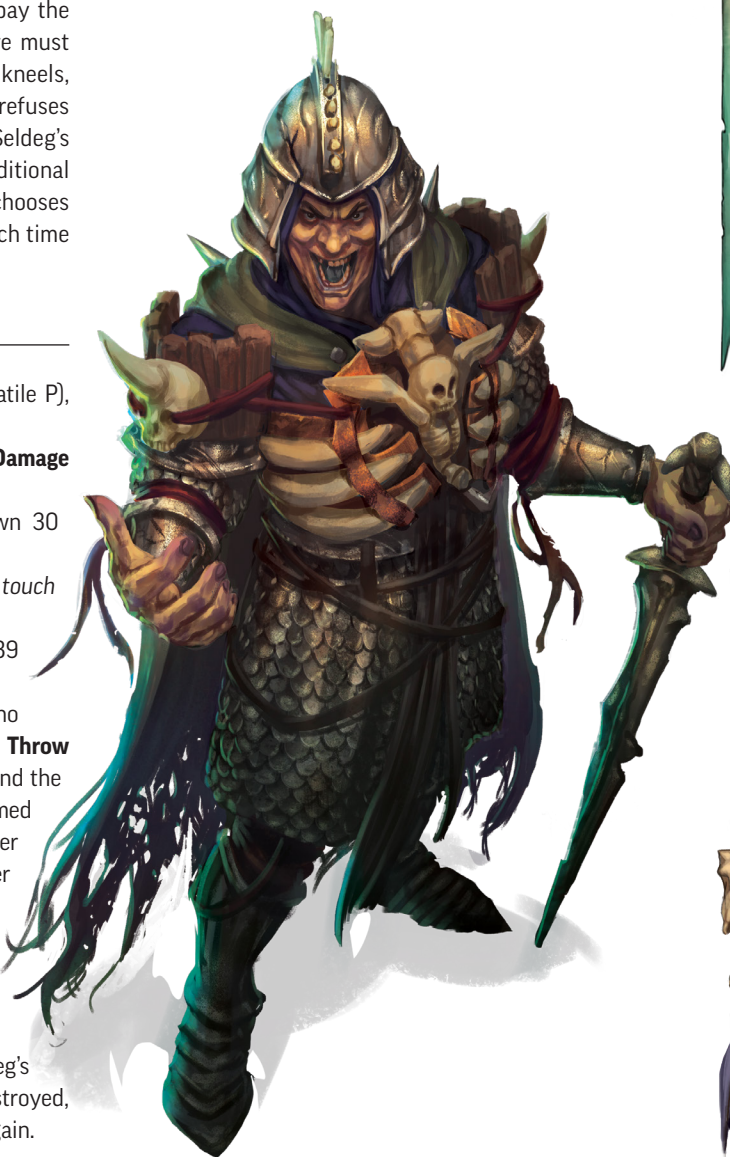
Success The target takes 3d6 mental damage.

Failure The target takes 6d6 mental damage and is stunned 1.

Critical Failure The target takes 12d6 mental damage and is stunned 4.

Unyielding Block At the start of each of Seldeg's turns, he gains two additional reactions he can use only to perform a Shield Block.

Weapon Master Seldeg has access to the critical specialization effects of any weapon he wields.



CLAWS OF THE TYRANT

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ASHES FOR OZEM

OF BLOOD AND FAITH

VELLUMIS GAZETTEER

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

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